The Essence of Christianity.

Seven Convention Essays

by

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This set of convention essays delivered by Dr. Franz Pieper uses the same selection used by Prof. J. T. Mueller in the 1933 Concordia Publishing House book *What Is Christianity? And Other Essays* with the addition of 1 extra essay in the Appendix.

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Table of Contents

The Essence of Christianity.

The Right Worldview.

The Reconciliation of Man With God.

The "Lay Movement" Ordained by God.

The Holy Scriptures.

The Open Heaven.

Appendix: Christianity as a Religion of the Hereafter.

[See this blog post and this blog post on whole book, this post on “The Open Heaven” essay]

The Essence of Christianity. ^

[Das Wesen des Christentums.]

(Lecture delivered by Prof. F. Pieper.)

During the last two years the essence of Christianity has been discussed in almost the whole of external Christendom. That is to say, the question has been discussed as to what Christianity actually consists of and how it differs from all other religions. These discussions were prompted by the lectures of the Berlin professor Harnack on this subject. What Harnack said and had printed soon afterwards, however, does not deserve the general attention it attracted. The Berlin professor merely repeated old, long-known assertions. Harnack's doctrine is briefly this: Christ is not God, but a uniquely wise and virtuous man. Christ therefore did not keep the divine law in place of man and bear the punishment for breaking the law.

Christianity therefore does not consist in faith in Christ, but in man's own morality, to which man is to be inspired and led by the unique personality of Christ. This teaching is, as I said, nothing new. The Unitarians and rationalists of all times, that is, the deniers of the Holy Trinity and the so-called rationalists of all times, have taught it. But the fact is that the appearance of Harnack has led to discussions on the essence of Christianity being conducted almost all over the world.

And the result? The result is by no means a consensus among those who call themselves Christians. We are faced with the fact that those who call themselves Christians do not agree on what Christianity is.

One might ask in bewilderment: How? Christianity has been in existence for almost two thousand years, indeed since the proclamation of the first promise of Christ, i.e. for almost six thousand years — and there is still disagreement in Christendom about the essence of Christianity? Are people still arguing about what Christianity actually consists of?

The answer is: Christianity is completely united with regard to the essence of Christianity. All members of the Christian Church actually believe that they have forgiveness of sins and salvation through faith in Christ, the Savior of sinners, without the merit of their works. Through this faith, and through nothing else, they are members of the Christian Church. Whoever has this faith belongs to the Christian Church; whoever does not have this faith does not belong to the Christian Church. Even the souls who belong to the Christian Church in the papacy and among the souls find the faith that they have forgiveness of sins not through their works or their own "morality", but through Christ. This is the one faith that the apostle Paul says of the Christian Church when he writes: "One Lord, one faith", Eph. 4:5. This is the "one mind" that the Holy Spirit has worked and maintains in all of Christendom, as we sing of the Holy Spirit: "All Christendom on earth holds to one mind." The faith and mind of all Christians is expressed in the words of Scripture: "The blood of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, cleanses us from all sin", 1 John 1:7, and: "Therefore we hold that a man is justified without the works of the law, through faith alone", Romans 3:28, as well as in the children's verse:

> Christ’s precious blood and righteousness
> My glory are, my beauteous dress;
> So clothed, before my God I’ll stand
> When I shall reach the heavenly land.

Dissenting opinions regarding the essence of Christianity are only found among the group that calls itself Christian, but is not

Christian. Of those people who want to come to God through their morality or through their works, who therefore place the essence of Christianity in morality, the Scripture says Gal. 5:4: "You, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace," and Gal. 3:10: "For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse." So these people do not belong to the Christian Church. It cannot be said of the Christian Church: "Many minds, many senses." The Christian Church is really one mind. The Christian Church is the congregation of believers, that is, the congregation of those who believe that they have forgiveness of sins through Christ. Luther writes: "There is no more than one church or people of God on earth, which has one faith, one Baptism, one confession of God the Father and of Christ, etc., and which holds and remains united in this. Everyone who wants to be saved and come to God must find himself in this church and be incorporated into it, and no one apart from it will be saved." *) [*) Erl. edition, 9, p. 285 f.; *St. L. Ed.* 12, 898]

This already answers the question of the essence of Christianity both positively and negatively. The importance of holding fast to the essence of Christianity has also already been pointed out.

However, it might be helpful to delve into the matter a little further. I'll explain it in more detail:

I. The essence of Christianity consists in faith in Christ, not in man's own morality.
II. The Christian Church must hold fast to this essence of Christianity if it is to fulfill its task in the world.

I.

Let us deal with the essence of Christianity in more detail.

By the essence of a thing we mean that which makes a thing what it is, or: by which a thing is what it is, by which therefore a thing differs from other things. Thus, for example, we speak of the essence of man in distinction from animals, and we find the essence of man in the fact that he has a rational soul in distinction from animals. In the same way we understand the essence of Christianity to be that which makes Christianity Christian and distinguishes Christianity from all other religions.

What is that? What is it in or about a person that makes him a Christian? Not that he wears a certain garment, as Luther often reminds us. Nor is it that he has body and soul, and indeed a

rational soul; nor is it that he is man or woman, young or old; nor is it that he is educated or a natural man, that he is white or black or yellow, etc.; nor is it that he is an American or German or Englishman; nor is it that he believes in a God and strives to live honorably according to his conscience and abide by the laws of the land. No, only one thing in man makes him a Christian: faith in Christ, that man, who is a sinner, relies on Christ to obtain God's grace and salvation. This distinguishes Christianity from all other religions that still exist in the world. All other religions are religions of works, that is, religions that give people instructions on how they — the people — can bring about God's favor through their own goodness, their own efforts, their own works. All non-Christian and supposedly Christian religions agree on this. Only the type of works they prescribe is different in the various religions. Christianity, however, is not a religion of works, but a religion of faith, the religion of faith in Christ. A Christian is a person who does not want to enter heaven through his own goodness and works, but through Christ's righteousness and works.

Where does this come from? Where does this essence of Christianity come from? Where does this essence of Christianity come from? Where does this difference between Christianity and paganism come from? It comes from this: the Christian religion has a Savior, all other religions do not. The pagan religions have mere teachers, teachers who give people moral precepts, by following which people are to bring themselves to heaven. Christ, the incarnate Son of God, approached the matter differently. He did not preach a new law, but he gave himself in place of men under the old, eternally binding law, kept it in place of men and paid the penalty for the transgression of the law in place of men by dying and shedding his blood. As the Scriptures testify of Christ: "When the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the Law, to redeem them that were under the Law", Gal. 4:4-5. And again: "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world", John 1:29. "Surely He hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows;.... He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and with His stripes we are healed." Isaiah 53:4-5. In short, because God's Son became man, kept God's law in the place of men, and paid the penalty for the transgression of the law, and thus became the Savior of all men, the essence of Christianity does not consist in the fact that a man tries to keep God's commandments, but in the fact that a man

believes in him who has kept the law for him and for all men. That is why Christianity is not a religion of works, but a religion of faith. That is why the essence of Christianity consists solely in faith in Christ. Luther used to say: A person is white from whiteness and black from blackness. A Christian is someone of Christ, that is, because he relies on Christ's deeds and suffering before God. Of course, Christianity also teaches morality and good works. We will see later that only in Christianity can true morality and good works before God be found. But a Christian does not want to be saved half or fourth or even a thousandth part through his own virtue and works, but only through Christ's righteousness and works. This essence of Christianity is already expressed in the children's saying: "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life", John 3:16. The well-known linguist Max Müller also aptly pointed out this essence of Christianity in contrast to all other religions when he gave a lecture on the Bible, the religious book of Christianity, to a Bible society. The famous orientalist said, among other things: "I may say that for forty years, in the discharge of my duties as Professor of Sanskrit in the University of Oxford, I have devoted as much time to the study of the sacred books of the East as any man in the world. And I venture to tell this assembly what I have found to be the one keynote of all these so-called holy books; the one keynote, the one chord that runs through them all, is salvation by works. They all teach that salvation must be purchased. Our own Bible — our holy book from the East — is a protest against this teaching from beginning to end. Good works are indeed also demanded in this holy book of the East; but they are only the outflow of a grateful heart — they are only a sacrifice of thanksgiving, the fruits of our faith. They are never the ransom of the true disciples of Christ. Let us not shut our eyes to what is noble and true; but let us teach the Hindus, Buddhists, and Mohammedans that there is only One Holy Book of the East which can be their comfort in that solemn hour when they must pass over into the unseen world all alone."

Thus we have seen that, and why, faith in Christ is Christianity. Let us now take a closer look at the opposing opinion, the opinion that Christianity consists in man's own goodness and righteousness.

So we say: in one respect we have respect for the — admittedly rare — people who sincerely endeavor to keep God's commandments in order to be saved in this way. The apostle Paul also

testifies to the Jews, who sought to establish their own righteousness, that they had “a zeal of God,” Romans 10:2. Such people are in one respect preferable to us than the coarse slaves of vice who live unashamedly according to their lusts. The righteousness of works, the *justitia operum*, has great value for the state and civil life, as our confession repeatedly emphasizes. In the state we live more freely in the company of honorable people than of vicious people. God also rewards natural respectability with earthly goods. But what is wrong is when someone wants to assert before God what is of value in the state and in civil life and thereby become righteous and saved before God. The apostle Paul, as we have heard, gives the Jews, who sought to establish their own righteousness before God, the testimony that they are zealous for God, but adds: "with ignorance", Rom. 10:2. They are zealous as those who do not understand the matter, who are spiritually blind. Accordingly, we say: whoever, with Professor Harnack, places the essence of Christianity in man's own morality instead of in faith in Christ, is not yet spiritually right in the head, is still blind, blind as a bat, has no idea of the essence of Christianity, still confuses paganism and Christianity, is still stuck in the religion of the flesh. Scripture expressly declares this.

The flesh expresses itself in relation to religion in two ways. In one part of mankind it says: There is no God, no heaven and no hell. All religion is foolishness. Let us eat and drink. That is the materialistic flesh. In another part the flesh of men speaks: There is a God, and to come to God one must avoid sin and do good. This is the religious flesh. But it is flesh nonetheless. When someone wants to come to God through his own morality, through his own works, this is what Scripture calls the flesh. When the Galatians, seduced by Jewish false teachers, had fallen from the gospel to the law, when they wanted to be justified before God by their own works instead of by faith in Christ, the apostle Paul calls out to them Gal 3:1, 3: "O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you that ye should not obey the truth? . . . Having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?" So it is called being carnally minded and walking according to the flesh if someone wants to come to God by his own doing. God's judgment here is different from man's judgment. It impresses us humans or, to use Luther's words, it "opens people's mouths" when someone makes an honest effort, or at least seems to make an honest effort, to earn heaven through an outwardly righteous life according to the precepts of the law, also with watchfulness, fasting, mortification and other special

works. We humans are inclined to call this "spiritual". But according to Scripture, this is vain carnality. If someone, in the opinion of earning God's grace, gave all his possessions to the poor, fasted almost to death, scourged himself with blood, even tore the flesh from his body piece by piece, that would still be flesh. Luther writes on Gal. 3:3 ("Having begun in the Spirit, will you now complete it in the flesh?"): "Paul does not call flesh here lust, animal passions or sensual desires. ... Flesh (here) is nothing other than righteousness, the wisdom of the flesh and the thoughts of reason, which endeavors to be justified by the law." *) [*) *St. L. edition*, IX, 288 f.; *AE* 26, 216] In short, to be justified by one's own works is the characteristic of blind paganism; to be saved by faith in Christ without one's own works is the characteristic of Christianity.

It is also connected with this that the essence of Christianity is a deeply hidden secret to all people. Harnack, of course, believes that what John the Baptist and Christ himself taught was already essentially known to mankind. He says: "What could have been 'new' after mankind had lived so long before Jesus Christ and had experienced so much spirit and knowledge?" **) [**) *Das Wesen des Christenthums*. Third edition, p. 30] Harnack's opinion is based on his false view that Christ only taught morality or the law of God. The law, however, is nothing new to mankind. The Gentiles also know about God's law, as Scripture often and explicitly testifies. The Gentiles not only believe that there is one God, Rom. 1:19, but they also believe in "the righteousness of God", Rom. 1:32. The work of the law is written in their hearts, as their conscience testifies, Rom. 2:15. When missionaries preach the law to the Gentiles, they are not preaching anything new to them. The writing of the divine law is somewhat blurred in the hearts of fallen men, but not completely erased. That is why we also find among the pagans, as Luther says, excellent summaries of the law, compilations in which not only evil works but also evil thoughts and desires are declared to be sinful. In short, Christianity has the law in common with the pagan religions, even though Christianity has the divine law in its original and perfect purity in the word of divine revelation. But one thing is completely unknown to the pagans. They are completely unaware that there is someone who has kept the law for them. They are completely unaware that God sent his Son into the world to make satisfaction to the divine law in the place of men, and that men are now saved without works of their own, through faith in

Christ. Paul calls this gospel of Christ in 1 Cor. 2[:7-8] "the secret, hidden wisdom of God", "which none of the rulers of this world have known". He describes this gospel of Christ as something "which no eye has seen and no ear has heard and which has not entered the heart of man". And the apostle describes this gospel of Christ as the actual content of all Christian doctrine when he says in the same passage: "I determined not to know anything among you save Jesus Christ and Him crucified." [1 Cor. 2:2] The Gentile world, which sits in darkness and in the shadow of death, will only see the light when the gospel of Christ is preached to it, when the message is brought to it: "You are reconciled to God through Christ; without your works there is grace, full grace for you through Christ; believe this, and you have a gracious God."

This is the essence of Christianity.

II.

And the Christian Church must hold fast to this essence of Christianity if it wants to fulfill the task assigned to it in this world, if it wants to accomplish that for which it was placed in the world by God and for which it is sustained by God.

What is the purpose of the Christian church in the world?

1.

First and foremost, to save people. Through the state, people are to be kept outwardly in order. The Church, on the other hand, is to bring salvation. That is the task of the Church in the world. All those who still want to be Christians readily admit this purpose of the Christian Church.

But how does the church achieve this purpose? Only by preaching the gospel of Christ crucified. It must preach: God made him who knew no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness that is before God. This gospel of Christ is a power of God that saves all who believe in it. No flesh is justified before God by its own morality, by its own works. On the contrary, those who walk in the works of the law are under the curse. As certain as it is that all those who believe in Christ have a gracious God, it is also certain that God is ungracious to all those who come before him with their own morality. What would happen, therefore, if the church wanted to place the essence of Christianity not in the gospel of Christ but in man's own morality, if instead of God's grace in Christ it wanted to make man's virtue and

works the basis of salvation? This would happen: it would not lead people to salvation, but to eternal damnation. With this preaching the church would become the greatest deceiver there is in the world. There is much deception in the world. In trade and commerce, things are continually presented differently than they are, and as a result, people are harmed, or seek to harm, in their earthly possessions. But the greatest deception in the world is a church that preaches human works instead of Christ crucified as the reason for salvation. It deprives people of their salvation, for no flesh is justified by the works of the law, says the apostle Gal 2:16.

The Papacy is therefore a deception of the world and of man. The papacy seeks to lure all people to itself with the promise that it will lead people safely to salvation. It claims to be the only church that can bring salvation. And when people, lured by this promise and by this claim, enter the fold of the papacy, they are led to trust in their own works and the works of the saints instead of in Christ the Crucified alone, and thus, as far as the papacy is concerned, are led en masse to hell. If people are saved under the papacy — and there are such people — it is because they do not believe the papist doctrine of works, but in need of sin and death embrace Christ as their only Savior. The papacy, with its doctrine of works cloaked in the appearance of ecclesiasticism, is the greatest deception in the world. The lodges with their religion are also a deception of the world and of men. For the lodges also have the religion of works. They are annoyed by the fact that Christ crucified is the one through whom all people must come to God. They want to lead people to a better hereafter on the basis of their own perfection. All sectarian preachers who speak as if Christianity consisted in following the "*Golden Rule*" and describe the conversion of man as an attempt to lead a better life are deceivers of mankind. We would also be deceiving humanity if we followed the Berlin professor and wanted to place the essence of Christianity in human morality. As far as our teaching is concerned, we would then not be able to lead anyone to salvation. All our preaching would be in vain. All our monetary offerings would be in vain. All our synodical meetings would be in vain. If the essence of Christianity consisted in our own morality instead of faith in the gospel of the forgiveness of sins for Christ's sake, if we had to be saved by our own works, then I would suggest that we adjourn immediately and go home. We would then be of no use as a church in the world, we would not be able to lead anyone to salvation, because no flesh is justified before God by the works of the law. I would not know what

else we could do but cry woe on the whole world and on ourselves.

Therefore we must remain unconvinced by the old and constantly rehashed error that the essence of Christianity consists in the morality of man. No, no! Christianity consists in faith in the Gospel, in faith in the forgiveness of sins which Christ has purchased for mankind. By preaching this, we save people and thus achieve the purpose of the Christian Church.

2.

On the other hand, the Christian Church should give people a clear conscience before God and thus the highest happiness that exists for people here on earth. Through the ministry of the Christian Church, a person should be able to speak, and indeed be able to speak in all situations in life — even in sickness, poverty and in the midst of death: "I know I have a gracious God; God is not angry with me, but God loves me as a father loves his child." If a church, as much as there is in it, does not do this, it is of no use in the world. Christ's testament is: "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you", John 14:27. The church must fulfill this testament of the Lord.

But how does this happen? By what alone does the Church give peace to consciences? By what alone can it work confidence in the hearts of men: we have forgiveness of sins, a gracious God? Only through the Gospel, only through faith in Christ, the Savior of sinners. "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory to come, which God shall give." Rom. 5:1-2. The doctrine of works, the trust in one's own morality, always leaves the conscience restless under the accusation of the divine law. God's law is a mighty greatness. It is a divine greatness. God's law, as it is written in Scripture and also as it is written in our own hearts, does not cease to condemn us and make us feel evil as long as there is still sinfulness in us. This condemning divine judgment of the law cannot be abolished by human thoughts and deeds, but only by another divine judgment, by the divine judgment of the gospel, by which God himself absolves sinners of their guilt of sin for the sake of Christ. The evil conscience in man gives way to only **one** treatment: the blood of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, must be applied to the heart through faith. Professor Harnack, of course, believes that consciences can be quenched without the blood of Christ. He instructs people that they should

only imagine God as Father according to the example of Christ. Everything that has a human face should only raise its head confidently and call God its Father, without including Christ's person and work in the gospel, that is, without believing in Christ crucified. But Harnack may speak of confidence and call for confidence as much as he likes. Confidence remains, to paraphrase Luther, only in words and in the mouth and never enters the heart. And if the whole of humanity were to join hands and cry out for ten years, indeed for a lifetime: We do not believe in Christ's blood shed for us, but we imagine God to be merciful, they would still be condemned by their own hearts and consciences. People would go to the pit with an evil conscience.

It says this: God is recognized as gracious, as Father, grasped, experienced only in Christ, not bypassing Christ. The Jews also wanted to call God their Father bypassing Christ. Like Harnack, they refused to include Christ's person and work in the gospel. But Christ reproaches them: "If you do not believe that I am" — namely your Savior and Redeemer of sins — "you will die in your sins", John 8:24. No creature can bring a conscience to rest, to peace; this is not the work of man, but the work of God. God the Holy Spirit must write a sentence of pardon into the conscience in place of the sentence of condemnation. But the Holy Spirit is a Spirit who glorifies Christ. By transfiguring Christ in the heart as the Lamb of God who bore the sin of the world, he wipes out the divine judgment of condemnation in the conscience and replaces it with the judgment of pardon and thus the confidence: "I have a gracious God." Teachers of works who place the essence of Christianity in man's own morality can temporarily put a conscience to sleep, but they cannot satisfy it. They are not bringers of peace to mankind, but tormentors of it. In his explanation of Isaiah 52:7, Luther calls teachers of works, such as the papists and Harnack, "sad night owls" who "frighten with their howling". But of the messengers who bring people the gospel of Christ crucified, he says: "They have lovely feet, for they bring with them the most cheerful word for troubled consciences. Those whose consciences have once been in danger know this." *) [*) St. L. Ed., VI, 611; cf. *AE* 17, 210 f.] And on Isa. 40:2 Luther remarks: "The forgiveness of sins does not stand in the work [of man], nor in teaching and doing the law, but in the gracious remission (of sins). And this saying must be carefully observed. For if

our consciences, shocked by the sight of sins and by the judgment of God, feel the law [that is, the judgment of the law], we should not take refuge in our deeds and works. For sin cannot be overcome by our works. ... A higher power, a greater power is required to overcome sin. Therefore the sorrowful souls must be so instructed that they first ... throw away all hope of their merit; then that they look to this Word: 'Your iniquity is forgiven,' and cast themselves on Christ, who became a curse for us, that he might redeem us from the curse, who therefore suffered and was crucified, that we, having overcome our sins, might live righteously by faith, as those who are reconciled to the Father through the blood of the Son and justified by faith in the Son. This is our doctrine, which we know to be powerful for the uplifting of consciences." *) [*) op. cit., 473 f.; cf. *AE* 17, 5 f.] We too must hold fast to this doctrine and remain unconfused with Harnack and all the teachers of works if we want to satisfy consciences in any other way.

3.

The Christian Church is to lead people back to the service of God, to make them rich in good works. To use a modern expression: The Christian Church is to cultivate "Christian morality". This is also a purpose of the redemption that came through Christ. St. Paul writes of Christ in Titus 2:14: "Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a people for his own possession, zealous of good works." The good works of men are not sufficient to attain salvation. Only Christ's perfect works are sufficient to attain salvation. But this does not mean that the good works of Christians should be disregarded. They are extremely precious. They are worth more than the whole world. For the world and everything in it will burn up on the Last Day. But the good works of Christians do not burn up, but follow them into eternity; they are crowned by God with a glorious reward of grace. Good works are an eternal treasure that Christians should gather for themselves here on earth. One of the duties of a Christian preacher is to ensure that all members of the congregation become rich in good works.

But how do good works come about? Only through faith in the gospel; only when salvation is not taught by the works of man, but by faith in Christ crucified. Whoever places the essence of Christianity in human morality,

in the works of man, loses good works along with salvation. No man has ever done a single good work until he has first believed that, without his works, he has a gracious God through faith in Christ.

Why? If a work is to be good, it must be done unto God, so there must be love for God in the heart of the doer. Now, after the fall into sin, love for God comes into a human heart in only one way, namely when it recognizes, believes and thus experiences: God has had mercy on me in Christ; God has saved me from eternal damnation through Christ and has given me heaven. Therefore, when the apostle Paul exhorts Christians to "Christian morality", he says in Romans 12:1: "I urge you by the mercies of God to present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God." "By the mercy of God," that is, by remembering the fact that God did not spare even his own Son, but gave him up for you all. Doing good works is an art that is limited to a very specific class of people, which only those who believe in Christ as their sin-redeemer can do. Luther says: "Christ must be ours and ours for all things before we have recourse to works." *) [*) St. L. Ed. XI, 128; *AE* 75, 216] And in another passage: "You must have heaven and already be saved" (namely through faith in Christ) "before you do good works. Works do not merit heaven, but again (the other way around), heaven, given by pure grace, does good works without any request for merit." **) [**) St. L. Ed. XII, 136; *AE* 75, 236].

Above all and first of all, Christian morality includes a heavenly mindedness, a mind that despises the vain things of this world and strives for what is above. This attitude, however, is not instilled in a person either by flattery nor by coercion, neither by moral instruction nor by culture and learning, but solely by giving him the heaven acquired through Christ. This happens solely through the gospel and faith in it. Everyone who does not have his treasure in heaven through faith in Christ enjoys the tears of this world in some way. Nothing else is possible.

Whoever therefore takes away from the Christian Church the doctrine that we have a gracious God and salvation through faith in Christ without our works, also takes away the good works of the Christian Church. And yet, since the time of the Apostle Paul, there have been many people who call themselves Christians and who have argued that, if "morality" and good works are to be right, faith in

Christ must be set aside and the works of man placed in the foreground. This is proof that when people follow their own thoughts instead of God's Word in matters of religion, they are ignorant, blind, foolish, mad and furious. They are as nonsensical as if someone who wants to have fruit wanted to achieve his purpose by destroying the tree that produces the fruit. No, there is an immutable order between faith in Christ and good works. Faith in Christ comes first, and good works come second. Whoever wants to put works first destroys good works. Good works must remain in second place, or they are not there at all. Apart from faith in Christ there is an external, civil, natural morality, which has its value for civil life, but no Christian morality, no good works, because apart from faith in Christ there is no Holy Spirit, no attitude directed towards God, no love for God. Apart from Christ, one can speak of love for God. The pagans have also done this. The papists, the Unitarians, the lodges, etc., also do so. But the talk remains mere talk. After the fall, love for God and neighbor is implanted in the human heart in only one way: through faith in Christ, the Savior of sinners. Therefore all those who, with Harnack and all the teachers of works, want to place the essence of Christianity in human morality instead of faith in Christ, are enemies and destroyers of all good works. The Christian Church must remain unaligned with them.

4.

The Christian Church should make men wise and understanding, so wise and understanding that they can clearly and surely distinguish between truth and error in religious matters. "You will know the truth," says the Lord Christ of those who belong to His church, John 8:32.

But when and how does spiritual understanding enter a person? St. Paul writes in 1 Cor. 2:15: "The spiritual man judges all things, and is judged by no one." Who is the "spiritual man" here? According to the context of the text, this is not the pastor or some specially gifted person in the church, but every Christian, that is, every person who has recognized and accepted the gospel of Christ by faith, who knows that it is not by one's own works, but by faith in Christ the crucified One, that one has a gracious God and salvation. This is what the apostle Paul preached at Corinth and everywhere, as he reports in the same passage, 1 Cor. 2:2: "I determined not to know anything among you

save Jesus Christ and Him crucified." The apostle calls being saved through Christ crucified "the secret, hidden wisdom of God", which even the rulers of this world have not recognized, but which God has revealed through the Holy Spirit in the gospel of Christ. And whoever believes this wisdom, whoever believes this gospel of Christ, is spiritually wise, spiritually understanding.

Here at this point is the dividing line between wisdom and foolishness among men. He who has recognized that man is saved through faith in Christ without works of his own is spiritually wise. He who still thinks that the essence of the Christian religion consists in man's own morality is still spiritually unwise, not merely somewhat, but completely blind, even if he otherwise united in himself all the knowledge that exists in the world. Christ, the Savior of sinners, who reconciled the world with God, is the only spiritual light for mankind. Whoever has not excluded this light within himself, that is, whoever does not trust in Christ's deeds and suffering before God, but still seeks to establish his own righteousness before God, still dwells in thick darkness. He understands nothing of the Old Testament, for the content of the Old Testament is Christ, the Savior of sinners, as Peter Acts 10:43: "To this" (namely Christ) "all the prophets testify that through his name all who believe in him shall receive forgiveness of sins." He understands nothing of the New Testament, for the content of the New Testament is also Christ, the Savior of sinners, as St. Paul testifies of his New Testament preaching: "I determined not to know anything among you save Jesus Christ and Him crucified," 1 Cor. 2:2. To him the whole of Holy Scripture is a completely incomprehensible book closed with seven seals, even if he knew the whole of Scripture word for word by heart. Despite all the talk of Christ, of Christian morality, of love for God and neighbor, etc., he does not understand the slightest thing about Christianity. He still thinks that a whole dozen roads lead to heaven, and he can become a Turk, a Jew, a Buddhist, a Papist, a Unitarian, a member of a lodge or anything else, depending on the circumstances and the individual. There is a saying: "All cats are gray in the night." But in the night, in pitch-dark night, are all those who believe that one can and must enter heaven through one's own morality. They therefore consider all religions to be essentially the same. But as soon as the light of the gospel of Christ, the Savior of sinners, has dawned on someone, the time of error in spiritual matters ceases. Now he knows that not a dozen ways lead to heaven, but only one way: trust in Jesus Christ the Crucified. He clearly and surely recognizes and rejects as false all religions that seek to make human activity the basis of God's grace

and salvation. He remains unconvinced by Turks, Jews, Buddhists, Papists, Unitarians and lodges and all false religions.

Thus we have seen why it is so important to maintain, under all circumstances and in the face of all error, that Christianity consists in faith in Christ crucified. Only in this way can we make people 1. saved, 2. certain of God's grace, 3. diligent in good works and 4. spiritually understanding. May God, by grace, keep us in the truth of the Gospel for Christ's sake!

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The Right Worldview. ^

(Lecture given at the 1923 Synod of Delegates by F. Pieper).

Venerable fathers and brothers! I have taken it upon myself to speak to you about the right worldview. Is that not too bold an undertaking? It would be if I had in mind to present my own world view or that of any other person. Why? Let me remind you of something the famous geographer Dr. Hermann Daniel said. Dr. Daniel only wants to present a small part of the world view, namely to answer the question of the movement of the earth, the sun and the stars. In his exposition he professes to be a so-called Copernican. He cites all the main reasons for Copernicanism. But at the end he remarks that in this case it can of course only be a "scientific hypothesis", that is, a human assumption or conjecture, not a scientifically established fact. To arrive at a certainty on this question, he adds, would require a point of view outside the world from which one could survey everything. Dr. Daniel says literally: "All the world systems that have been established are not based on experience — which would require a standpoint outside the earth — but on conclusions and combinations. All are and therefore remain hypotheses." *) [*) *Handbuch der Geographie* 3, 1877, p. 9] Since I, like all other people, do not have my point of view outside the world, but on this earth, I would certainly consider it a more than foolhardy undertaking if I wanted to speak to this venerable assembly about the right — and indeed the only right — world view. If I undertake this nevertheless, it will be from the highest standpoint there is, from a standpoint that is not only outside this world, but higher than heaven

and earth. It is from God's standpoint that I want to speak to you about the right view of the world. It is not my or any other person's world view, but God's world view that I want to explain. But how do we humans know about God's worldview? Dear fathers and brothers, we humans have God's own Word. God has given us humans his word by grace. The Holy Scriptures are God's Word. Of course, this is denied, especially in our time, even in the midst of external Christianity. On the other hand, I am not ashamed to confess — and I make no apology for this confession — that I consider the Holy Scriptures to be God's own infallible Word given to us human beings. I also know that all the delegates who have been sent to this great assembly fully share my confession of the Holy Scriptures. And we all need not be ashamed of our commitment to Scripture. We have great and authoritative examples on this point, namely the examples of Christ and his holy apostles and prophets. We know, of course, how to adduce such reasons for the divine authority of Scripture as may convince a reasonable human mind that it is more rational to recognize the infallible divine authority of Scripture than to deny it. But let us leave these reasons out of consideration. What is decisive for us from the outset (*a priori*) is how Christ, our Savior and the Savior of the whole world, views Scripture. And we have Christ's view, as He Himself testifies in His high priestly prayer (John 17:20), in the Word of His holy apostles and prophets. We believe Christ, our dear Savior, from His word when he assures us in John 3:16: "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." So we believe him completely when he testifies to the Scriptures in John 10:35: "The Scriptures cannot be broken" and says of His apostles in John 17:14: "I have given them Thy Word" and adds (v. 17): "Thy Word is truth." From this word of infallible truth I will now set out the right worldview for our instruction and admonition in a few main points.

I.

The right worldview certainly includes a certain knowledge of the origin of the world. Where does the world come from? The world is not from eternity; nor did it develop gradually (evolution), but God created it through his almighty Word, that is, called it into existence. God himself tells us in his Word: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth", Genesis 1:1, and: "My hand has made all things that are", Ezek. 66:2. And just as God created the world,

so it is He alone who sustains the world. "By Him were all things created, ... and by Him all things consist", Col. 1:16-17. If God were to withdraw his hand from the world for just one moment, it would disappear in the same instant, completely, without leaving even a trace or a speck of dust. It would cease to exist, just as it did not exist before it was created by God. Because it still exists now, each of God's works of creation that surround us calls out to us incessantly and clearly: "God made me." There is an old Latin saying that reads: *Praesentemque refert quaelibet herba Deum*, that is: “Every blade of grass shows us God's presence.” Every person, whether educated or uneducated, recognizes, for example, when he looks at a living flower and uses his intellect, that it was not made in St. Louis or Chicago or New York, but that it is a product of God's omnipotent hand. In short, the only right view of the world is this: God made everything, and everything has its existence in God. Whoever speaks of a world that exists from eternity and of a self-development of the world thereby reveals that he renounces rational human thinking. His world view is one hundred percent in error.

But the right world view also means that we know for certain where man comes from. This knowledge is naturally very close to us. It is particularly interesting and important for us. So where is man from? Man did not develop by himself, neither from a primordial cell nor from a lower animal. Nor did God develop man gradually, but created him fully formed, in his — God's — image, in the knowledge of God and holiness of will, as ruler over all other creatures on earth. Again, this is God's own account in the first chapter of the Bible. In the second chapter of the Bible we then have a more detailed account of what happened at the creation of the first man, Adam. We read Genesis 2:7: "And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul." Now the Fall of Man, with its sad consequences, intervened. But man has not become an animal in essence as a result, but remains God's creature. It is quite the right view of man when we confess in the [Small] Catechism: "I believe that God has made me and all creatures; that He has given me my body and soul, eyes, ears, and all my members, my reason and all my senses, and still preserves them." And how important is this realization! It will remind us to look at ourselves with a kind of amazement, because God has prepared us so artificially and finely according to body and soul, with the simultaneous reminder that we do not abuse the body with its limbs and the soul

with its powers, but place it solely at the service of Him whose creatures we are according to body and soul.

Thus we would have the right view with regard to the question: "Where does the world come from?" and in particular also with regard to the question: "Where does man come from?"

But the right view of the world also includes the question of where we are headed. What will happen to the world and what will happen to man?

First of all: What will happen to the world? What will happen to the world that we see above us, around us and below us? It will not remain forever. God tells us in his Word: "Heaven and earth will pass away", Matt. 24:35. "The essence of this world will pass away", 1 Cor. 7:31. When? I do not know. And I also know that no other person in the world knows. The Scripture says: "Of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels in heaven", Matt. 24:36. This is a secret that God has not revealed to us in His Word, but has kept to Himself. In their own cleverness, people have wanted to calculate the day and hour of the end of the world. But they have always come to nothing with their calculations, and all future calculators of the end of the world will also come to nothing. Like all the words of Scripture, these words will also prove to be true: "Of that day and hour knoweth no man." But the end of the world is certain. Scripture testifies to this so often and so emphatically, because we humans forget it all too easily. The end will come quite suddenly when Jesus Christ, the Judge of the world, appears visibly. The appearance of Christ for judgment and the end of the world will occur suddenly and everywhere on the whole earth at the same time. "As the lightning cometh out of the east and shineth even unto the west, so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be", Matthew 24:27. We will not be able to receive news from London, Berlin or Paris, neither *by wire* nor *by wireless*. The whole of the world's many-sided and thousand-fold interlocking and intermeshing gears will suddenly come to a standstill. No ship on the ocean or on the inland lakes continues to sail. No railroad train between the mountains of the East and the vast plains of the West moves on. No car or automobile on the country roads or in the cities moves on. No businessman on his way to his store and no worker on his way to his usual work takes another step. Everything — everything in this world suddenly comes to a standstill. All possession of the goods of this world also ceases. No one will still own land, because all land will disappear from under our feet. No one will still own cash, be it gold or silver, no one will still own securities, regardless of whether they are *United States bonds* or city

bonds. All mortgages expire automatically. All money and all monetary assets are completely devalued. The [German] mark, which is currently "weak in value", and the dollar, which is currently "strong in value", are then completely equal in value. They will both be worth nothing. The end has come — the end of all things that belong to life here on earth.

But where will man go? What happens to humanity? Heaven and earth will pass away, but people will remain. All of them without exception! All those who have lived on this earth from Adam to the end of the world — all will remain for eternity. No man can destroy himself, he may start whatever he wants, and God will not destroy him. All people, whether previously dead or still alive, stand in rank and file, some on the right, others on the left of the Judge of the world. There are, of course, religious communities that dare to teach the opposite. They claim that at least the wicked will be destroyed at the end of the world, will cease to exist (*annihilation*). They also eagerly propagandize in the world and find many followers. When the annihilist Charles [Taze] Russell spoke in St. Louis about ten years ago, thousands crowded in to hear him. But this is an erroneous and extremely dangerous piece of an erroneous worldview. But more on this when we consider the purpose of the world between its beginning and its end.

II.

What is the purpose of the world while it still exists, and therefore what is the purpose of every human life in this world? This is obviously part of the right worldview. Anyone who does not know the purpose of the world and his own life lives without purpose or blindly from day to day. But those who know what the world is still for and what they themselves are still in the world for, have a bright light shining over their lives. But we are again faced with the question: Is there a reliable and certain exclusion about the purpose of the world and our own life? Certainly, if we turn to the right information bureau. God in his Word, that is, in the Holy Scriptures, gives us such clear information about the purpose of the world and of human life that only those people who turn away from God's Word can remain ignorant of it and grope through this life in the dark.

The Holy Scriptures teach very clearly that the present world exists and is maintained in existence by God for the sole purpose of preaching the Gospel of Christ in it, that is, the message of the forgiveness of sins for the sake of Christ's vicarious satisfaction. Christ speaks this clearly and sharply in Matthew 24:14, as if engraved in bronze and granite. It

says: "This Gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come", namely the end of the world. God has paid a great cost for mankind. He has purchased sinful humanity for heaven through the blood of Christ, his incarnate Son, and now allows the world to exist so that the forgiveness of sins may be preached in the world for the sake of the blood of Christ and accepted by faith.

The preaching of the forgiveness of sins through faith in Christ was not the purpose of the original world, that is, the world in which sin did not yet exist. At that time there was no need for the preaching of the forgiveness of sins, because man was not yet a sinner, but lived in the created knowledge of God and holiness of will in unadulterated communion with God. This earth was the beautiful dwelling place of a man who was beautiful in soul and body and not yet disfigured by sin. As the biblical account goes on to say, God placed man in the Garden of Eden, in paradise. The Garden of Eden is described in the second chapter of the Bible. But the Fall of Man intervened. Man, seduced by Satan, ate from the tree of which God had commanded him: "You shall not eat from it." [Gen. 2:17] Man transgressed God's commandment and fell into the greatest of evils: into guilt, into guilt before his God. Through his guilt before God, he lost his fellowship with God, so that he fled from God in horror, as we read in the third chapter of Genesis. Because he had become a sinner, he also lost his original beautiful dwelling place, paradise. His dwelling place became an earth which, like the present earth, bears thorns and thistles and on which man eats his bread by the sweat of his brow.

However, through God's grace, there is a return to God's fellowship for us humans who have become sinful. There is a return to paradise for us, a paradise that is more beautiful and more glorious than the first one.

How or by what means does this return happen? Certainly not through man's own actions and works. This is the erroneous view of man who has fallen into sin and thus become blind, who no longer understands God's ways. Man can neither fully nor partially make up for the damage caused by the fall into sin. Those who seek a way back into God's fellowship through their own works remain under the curse of the law. The law of God demands a perfect fulfillment that man cannot achieve. The return takes place without works of one's own, through faith in the Savior, whom God promised to mankind immediately after the fall and who appeared in the fullness of time. The return happens through

faith in Jesus Christ. Who is Jesus Christ? Jesus Christ is not merely a pious man who has shown us by his example how we can return to God's fellowship through our own piety and works. Jesus Christ is the eternal Son of God, born of the Father in eternity. But this eternal Son of God became man and fulfilled the divine law in the place of men through his perfectly holy life, and through his innocent suffering and death paid in full for all the sins of all men. As the Scriptures testify: "When the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the Law, to redeem them that were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption of sons" (Gal 4:4-5). And again: "Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the Law, being made a curse for us", Gal. 3:13. Therefore it is by grace alone, without works of their own, through faith in Christ, that men now return to God's fellowship, obtain forgiveness of their sins and salvation. Good works have great value before God. They follow Christians into eternity. They are crowned by God with an eternal reward of grace. They do not burn in the fire of the Last Day, which consumes all earthly things. But good works are far too small to obtain God's grace and salvation. Only the perfect merit of Christ, the highly praised Savior of the world, is sufficient for this. Not one person has ever returned to God's community of grace in any other way than by trusting in Christ's merit alone, not even during the four thousand years before the appearance of the Son of God in the flesh. For thus the apostle Peter teaches us in the house of the centurion Cornelius: "To this JEsu all the prophets [namely all the prophets of the Old Testament] testify, that through his name all who believe in him should receive forgiveness of sins." And the world still stands for the sole purpose of this preaching! As we heard from the mouth of Christ: "This Gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come." [Matt. 24:11]

Of course, the majority of people do not agree with this. They have a different world view. They think that the world still exists for the purpose of enabling people to show how marvelously they can develop themselves, what they can achieve in morality, education and culture. But this is an erroneous view of the world, which will infallibly lead all those who cling to it to eternal ruin. The purpose of the world's existence is not that men should show what they can achieve morally, but the purpose of the world's existence is that men should despair of their own morality before God, recognize themselves before God as lost sinners and believe in the Saviour of sinners sent by God, in the Saviour who, with his

perfect morality, is their righteousness before God and who, by the shedding of His divine blood, has blotted out their whole record of sin. As Christ commands His Church to preach "repentance" and "forgiveness of sins" in His name among all nations and until the Last Day, Luke 24:47.

O that all men would recognize that for the purpose of this preaching the world still stands! For this purpose the sun, moon and stars still shine. For this purpose God still gives seed and harvest, frost and heat, summer and winter, day and night. It is for this purpose that God still allows the kingdoms of this world to exist, with their extensive trade and commercial life. The kingdoms of this world with its civil life are only a scaffolding for the building of the Christian church through the preaching of the gospel. To apply what has been said above to this point: If God no longer wanted the gospel preached, then no more ships would sail on the sea, no more railroad trains would move on the land, no more workers or businessmen would go about their daily work.

All misfortune and all evil that God brings upon the world should also serve the gospel. People should recognize themselves as sinners who deserve God's judgment and believe in the gospel of God's grace in Christ. God punishes temporally so that we do not have to perish eternally. In the 24th chapter of the Gospel of Matthew, our Savior tells us a biography of the world in terms of the judgments that will come upon the world. The Savior refers to the many and incessant wars of the nations among themselves, to pestilence, the time of trouble, earthquakes. But the ultimate purpose of these judgments in time is not actually to punish, but to warn. They are warning punishments. *It is God`s way to warn before He strikes*. This is the correct world view of temporal judgments. As harsh as they may seem, they are in the service of divine mercy. When earthquakes wreak great destruction in San Francisco or Messina; when floods engulf thousands of people in Galveston or on the coast of Chile; when epidemics in China or in our own country devour millions of people; when millions of people perish miserably in Asia and in the countries of Europe due to hardship and famine: then people should not stop at investigating the physical causes of these evils, but at the same time and primarily regard these evils as God's punitive judgments, which we all equally deserve. Thus our Savior teaches us Luke 13:1–5. When at one time it was said to him from among his hearers about the Galileans who had been slain at the sacrifice, and about the eighteen on whom the tower of Siloam fell, the Lord said, "Suppose ye that these Galilaeans were sinners above all the Galilaeans

because they suffered such things? I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent [*μετανοῆτε*, repent], ye shall all likewise perish. Or those eighteen, upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, and slew them, think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem? I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." This is the correct view of the misfortunes that will occur in the world before the Last Day. God save us from the Pharisaical worldview against which the Lord so powerfully warns us in Luke 13. The newspapers report almost daily on misfortunes of various kinds. When we read these reports, it should not be done thoughtlessly, much less with the attitude: "I thank you, God, that I am not as guilty as those people", but we should pause for a moment, fold our hands and say to ourselves: "O God, have mercy on me and on all sinners!"

Yes indeed! There is still a time of grace for the world before the Last Day. God swears to us in His Word: "I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die?" Ezek. 33:11 Christ has purchased salvation from eternal damnation and a home in heaven, not just for some people, but for all people without exception. Why do you want to die, you children of men?

We must here emphatically warn against a dangerous view of the eternal fate of the human race after heaven and earth have passed away. The summary of the first lecture was: The world has a beginning and an end. Man also has a beginning, but no end; he remains eternal, either in eternal salvation or in eternal damnation.

Some people are now protesting very strongly against this. They consider themselves wise and allow themselves a self-made worldview. In scholarly terms, they say: Surely the history of mankind cannot possibly end in "dualism". In somewhat less scholarly but generally understandable terms, they want to say that there is no such thing as eternal damnation. Either all people will be saved, or the part of humanity that has not converted to Christ, the Savior of sinners, in this life will still have the opportunity in the world to come to make up for what they have missed. Still others go so far as to say that the wicked will be destroyed either immediately in the Last Judgment or later.

At the beginning we made the contract that we would not set before our eyes and take to heart worthless human views, but the authoritative divine views. According to God's Word, however, the history of mankind ends in eternal dualism, in an eternal separation of people, due to human guilt. When

Christ, the Judge of the world, appears, two will lie on one bed; one will be accepted, the other will be abandoned. Two will be grinding together; one will be taken, the other will be left. Two will be in the field; one will be taken and the other left, Luke 17:34-36, and in the powerful and detailed description in Matthew 25:31-46 it says: "When the Son of Man shall come in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then shall He sit upon the throne of His glory. And before Him shall be gathered all nations; and He shall separate them one from another as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats. And He shall set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say unto them on His right hand, Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. . . . Then shall He say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels. . . . And these shall go away into everlasting punishment; but the righteous into life eternal." Therefore God commands — as Paul also reminds the educated Athenians — all men everywhere to repent, Acts 17:30, and therefore Christ commands his Church, that is, to those who have believed in him through his grace, to preach repentance and forgiveness of sins in his name both near and far. This is the right worldview. Christians are still in the world to preach the gospel. For this he still gives them life and breath, for this he sustains them in faith, for this he still gives them strength of body and soul, for this he still gives them earthly possessions.

What results for us Christians from the right worldview, especially with regard to individual points that are particularly important for our time, will, God willing, be summarized later in a brief exposition from God's Word.

III.

In explaining the right worldview, we wanted to pay particular attention to a few points which it would be very harmful for us and our time to overlook.

First of all, in the ecclesiastical activity that we are encouraging ourselves to undertake during these sessions, let us not forget our concern for the salvation of our own souls. This reminder might seem superfluous. Someone might think: How should we forget to work for our own salvation with fear and trembling as we work to build and expand the Christian Church here on earth! But let the Holy Scriptures also give us the right view on this point. The

holy apostle Paul was extremely active in the church. He worked harder than all the others. And yet he was careful to ensure his own salvation, as we can see from his own words: "I keep under my body and bring it into subjection lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway", 1 Cor. 9:27. Church Fathers and, after them, our ancient theologians refer to Noah's carpenters who worked on building the ark but did not enter the ark themselves and so perished in the flood. In our work to build and expand the kingdom of God on earth, we too should not forget the question: "Are we ourselves members of the Christian church?" Who is a member of the Christian Church? According to love, however, we should consider everyone to be a member of the Christian church who confesses with his mouth faith in Christ, the Savior of sinners, and does not refute the confession of his mouth by his conduct and his works. This judgment of love is God's will and order. We should not want to look into hearts. This is a privilege of God. The counsel of the heart will only be revealed on Judgment Day. [Rom. 2:16] But each and every one of us should constantly examine ourselves to see what we mean and how our hearts relate to the kingdom of God. Our Savior reminds us of this so powerfully when he says: "The kingdom of God cometh not with observation; neither shall they say, Lo, here! or lo, there! For behold, the kingdom of God is within you", Luke 17:20-21. The kingdom of God is of course a powerful reality in the world. It is the kingdom for the sake of which the world still stands, as we have seen. But this kingdom is invisible to the human eye. It consists of people who believe in the Savior of sinners in their hearts. This faith, which God alone sees and which the individual recognizes through self-examination, makes a person a member of the Christian church. To give an example: Here in the city of Fort Wayne and here in this assembly, all those — and only those — are members of the Christian church who, through the working of the Holy Spirit in their hearts, recognize themselves as lost sinners and trust in Christ's substitutionary satisfaction alone for the forgiveness of sins and salvation. Let us be reminded of this by our Savior's words: "Behold, the kingdom of God is within you". In our time there are strange ideas about how a person enters the kingdom of God. For example, there is much talk of the journey to Palestine, to Jerusalem, to Mount Zion. On the other hand, it is important to note: There is no need for pilgrimages or a change of location in order to come to Jerusalem and Mount Zion in the sense of the New Testament. Holy Scripture says of all those who have come to faith in Christ, the Savior of sinners, Heb. 12:22-24: "Ye are

come unto Mount Zion and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels; to the general assembly and Church of the First-born, which are written in heaven, and to God, the Judge of all, and to the spirits of the just men made perfect, and to Jesus, the Mediator of the New Covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel." We who are gathered here in the auditorium of Concordia College in Fort Wayne, Indiana, and who by the grace of God believe in Christ, that is, believe that only the blood of Christ, the Son of God, cleanses us from all sin, are here on Mount Zion. Therefore, let us not forget the apostle's admonition in 2 Corinthians 13:5: "Examine yourselves whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves." Our prayer and supplication is that God will keep each of us in the faith of the gospel and thus on Mount Zion. Then and only then will we be able to fulfill the divine command: "O Zion, that bringest good tidings, get thee up into the high mountain; O Jerusalem, that bringest good tidings, lift up thy voice with strength; lift it up, be not afraid; say unto the cities of Judah [which in the New Testament is the entire world], Behold your God!" Isaiah 40:9, namely, the gracious God who so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son.

The right view of the world also includes the right view of the family, child rearing and the Christian school. As is well known, the family forms the basis for state and church. Everything that touches the family touches both divine orders. According to the right worldview, children are not shunned in the family, but welcomed as a precious gift from God. As Scripture teaches: "Behold, children are a gift of the Lord, and the fruit of the womb is a gift" (Ps. 127:3). And this precious gift is given to parents not only for the purpose of nourishing, clothing and equipping their children for this life, but also and especially so that they may lead them through this world into the eternal heavenly dwellings. For this is the divine instruction to parents concerning their children: "Bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." Eph. 6:4. The Christian mother folds her child's hands in prayer at a very early age and talks to him about his dear Savior, which, by the way, the child understands very quickly and wonderfully well. Both father and mother are also careful not to give their children any offense, which the Savior forbids with such a grave threat, Matthew 18:6. On the contrary, the parents are anxious that their children receive a deep, where possible, indelible impression of a Christian home, that is, of a home in which God's Word reigns through home devotions in the family circle and through regular attendance at public church services. And when school time has come for the children,

the parents remember that there are two kinds of schools, schools in which God's Word reigns and schools in which God's Word does not reign. Of the latter we all rightly judge that we cannot advise anyone to send their child there. It cannot go without harm and offense for the child's soul. Christian children naturally belong in Christian schools. Because this is sometimes forgotten, our Synodical Constitution reminds the congregations that they have a duty to establish and maintain Christian schools. The state of Christian knowledge and Christian life in a congregation is revealed precisely by whether it is really seriously endeavoring to establish and maintain a Christian school. The venerable fathers and brothers are familiar with several words of Luther in which he praises the Christian school and the office of a Christian school teacher. He says, among other things: "If I could or must desist from preaching and other things, I would prefer no office but to be a schoolmaster or teacher of boys. For I know that this work is the most useful, greatest and best next to preaching, and I do not yet know which of the two is the best. For it is difficult to make old rascals pious, since the preaching office works on them and has to labor much in vain; but the young trees can be better bent and pulled, although some break in the process." (St. L. X, 454 f.)

The correct worldview of Christians with regard to the doctrine that they themselves believe from the heart and proclaim in the world also includes adherence to the unadulterated teaching of the gospel. But the gospel is only genuine if no law is added to it, but *free grace* is taught. It must be taught that God is perfectly reconciled with the whole human world through the vicarious satisfaction of Christ and now proclaims forgiveness of sins to the ends of the earth for Christ's sake through the gospel, so that it may be appropriated by men through faith. This unadulterated gospel generates Christian faith and is the foundation of Christian faith. There is no such thing as a Christian faith that relies partly on Christ's merit and partly on one's own worthiness and works. It is only a human imagination. In the civil court, however, there are two classes of people, the civilly honorable and the civilly dishonorable. The situation is different in God's court when it comes to obtaining forgiveness of sins and salvation. Before God there is only one class of people. Holy Scripture teaches: "There is no difference; for all have I sinned and come short of the glory of God, being justified freely by His grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." [Rom. 3:22-24] Nor does

any human conscience come to rest before God until it has given up trusting in its own works and relies on Christ's perfect merit alone. This is also confirmed by the experience of all Christians throughout the world. The Lutheran Church admits that there are also true Christians outside its communion. But all those who are true Christians in other church communions do not trust before God in their own worthiness and works, but in Christ's substitutionary satisfaction alone, and in this way alone are assured with us, certain of forgiveness of sins and salvation. They confess with us and all Christians on earth: "Now that we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." Without this faith in the Savior crucified for the sins of the world, there is no peace with God. That is why we must hold fast to the pure gospel as it is so clearly taught in Scripture and as we have received it from our fathers. Modern Protestantism and even modern Lutheranism, have also fallen away from the pure gospel and want to make the attainment of forgiveness of sins and salvation dependent on man's own efforts. But this is apostasy from Christianity. Scripture teaches: "And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace", Romans 11:6. So we want to hold on to the pure doctrine of grace by the grace of God. We do not want to be outdone by anyone in the world as far as courtesy and love of peace are concerned. But it is God's will and command that we do not compromise in matters of Christian doctrine. Here, by God's grace, we are to stand firm as a rock. It is an erroneous worldview to think that this is detrimental to the church. This alone builds the Church of Christ. The history of the Missouri Synod proves this. God has made room for us in the world precisely by adhering to the pure doctrine of the Gospel. And let us not forget: the confession of pure Christian doctrine also includes the rejection of opposing error. Whoever allows error or ambiguity to stand on an equal footing with the truth thereby gives up the truth, because it is the nature of the truth to reject error.

Finally, the right worldview of Christians, which must be preserved, also includes holy zeal and holy faithfulness in the proclamation of the Gospel in the world. After all, this is the real business that their Savior has commanded them to do as Christians. Of course, they should also show themselves to be a model of faithfulness in the civil vocation in which God has placed them in this life. They should also make a good name for

Christianity in the world through their faithfulness in their civil vocation. This is part of the publicity God wants. But above all, a Christian is diligent and faithful in the direction of his actual Christian vocation, namely in the care for the proclamation of the Gospel in the world. As soon as a person has become a Christian, he has his actual home in heaven (Phil. 3:20 and his noblest and most important endeavor in the world is to lead others with him to heaven. Whether he is a large or small businessman, a large or small farmer, a simple worker or a supervisor of workers and an employer, the Christian church is and remains his primary interest. Church matters are his favorite topic of conversation, both in the family and in the company of Christian brothers. Among the newspapers he reads, church newspapers are the most important to him. They tell him how things are going in the church, his spiritual home here in this world. They tell him where his prayers and gifts are needed. Of course, he is also careful to put as much of his earthly possessions as possible at the service of the Gospel before all money and all earthly possessions are completely devalued on Judgement Day. This is the faithfulness taught in Holy Scripture in the orientation of the Christian's vocation here in this world.

In this way, dear fathers and brothers, our Savior also wants to find us in faithful activity when he suddenly appears on the Last Day and at the end of the world. He reminds us of this so powerfully and forcefully in the parable of the Talents. He gives one man five talents, another two, a third one talent. Those who had acted faithfully with the talents entrusted to them are highly praised by the Lord; the one who had buried his talent in the ground is sharply rebuked and disgraced, Matthew 25:14-30.

This is said to all Christians in general. For they are all called to proclaim the virtues of him who called them from darkness to his marvelous light, 1 Peter 2:9. But this applies especially to pastors and to all of us who administer a teaching office in the Christian church. On another occasion, the Savior admonished his listeners: "Be ye therefore ready also, for the Son of Man cometh at an hour when ye think not," Luke 12:40, Peter asked: "Lord, speakest Thou this parable unto us or even to all?" The Lord answered the question with "Yes", for he continues with words that refer especially to the preaching and teaching ministry in the church: "How great is the faithful and wise steward whom the Lord sets over his servants to give them their due in due season! Blessed is the servant whom his master finds doing so when he comes." Luke 12:41-42 from the German]

So, by God's grace, we pastors and teachers also want to give the

best we can. Our dear Savior does not expect us to do half a job, but a full job. Will we do it? Yes, by His grace, if we remember daily that He has bought us with His precious blood of God for our work in His kingdom and has prepared for us an eternal and blessed dwelling place in heaven. Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, continues to be and forever and ever! Amen.

Lehre und Wehre.

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The Reconciliation of Man with God.*) ^

*) In response to several requests, we are reprinting this paper by Dr. Pieper, first published in the **Synodical Report of the Southern Illinois District in 1916**, in *Lehre und Wehre* with several deletions and additions made by the speaker himself. In today's official Christianity, it is well known that the basic Christian truth dealt with here, which alone makes and sustains Christians and without which there would be no Christian Church at all, is almost universally concealed, indeed, in many cases openly and deliberately denied. This, however, is a warning to all true Christians to stand up for it all the more zealously, often, decisively and loudly, as is done in a skillful and effective way in this and the following articles by Dr. Pieper. May God bless the reading of them! F. B. [F. Bente, Editor]

Reconciled with God! These words express the greatest happiness that a person can enjoy here on earth. Since the fall of man, human life in this world has been a life full of sorrow and misery. So says the Scripture, and people come to realize this through experience. But for those who know they are reconciled with God through faith in the gospel of Christ, there is actually no more misery in this world. He has overcome the world with its sorrow and misery. Everything that is terrible in the world has lost its horror for him. In the dark night of affliction, he sees the heavens open. Poverty, pain, illness, perhaps lifelong illness, are truly no child's play; but those who know that they are reconciled with God in the process still gain the strength to say: "Whom have I in heaven but Thee? And there is none upon earth that I desire beside Thee. My flesh and my heart faileth, but God is the Strength of my heart and my Portion forever,." Psalm 73:25-26. Even death is no child's play. The whole world is bankrupt in the face of death, even the so-called great spirits. [Friedrich] Schiller confesses in a letter to [Alexander von] Humboldt that he knows of no consolation against death. But whoever knows himself to be reconciled with God is also confident in death and says: "Death, where is your sting?" 1 Cor. 15:55. It is no

small matter to be stoned to death, to have one's head cut off or to be burnt. Nevertheless, Stephen is confident even under stoning, because he saw heaven open (Acts 7:55), and John Hus, in the flames of the stake at Kostnitz, confidently commits his soul into his Savior's hands and still has strength to pray even for his blinded accusers. Luther, when speaking of this subject, says: "He who knows that God is gracious to him, walks through this life, especially in tribulation, on nothing but roses, and the land flows to him with milk and honey and nothing but precious wine. (St. L. II, 1988, § 201-205 [AE 8, 254])

Now it is God's will that all men should enjoy the happiness of reconciliation with God. God has reconciled the whole world to Himself through Christ, and those who accept this in faith enjoy reconciliation with God, Rom. 5:1-3. But the arch-enemy of men, the devil, does not grant men this happiness. He is busy tempting people so that they either despise the reconciliation brought about by Christ as unnecessary or seek to establish their own reconciliation alongside it and thus lose out on reconciliation through Christ. So God must come upon the world with terrible plagues, with war, floods, earthquakes and other great calamities, in order to remind people of what the world still stands for, namely for the purpose that people repent and embrace in faith the reconciliation with God brought about by Christ. God grant that none of us may be among those who despise the reconciliation that God has brought about at such a high price, namely through the actions and suffering of his incarnate Son! First of all, we see:

Man is in need of reconciliation with God.

That man needs reconciliation with God, or — what amounts to the same thing — that there is a wrath of God over the sins of men, is testified to by a whole army of preachers. This wrath of God is revealed in the realm of nature, in the conscience of man, but especially in the Word of God.

We see disruption and disorder in the realm of nature and in human society. There is a battle of all against all. The irrational creature fights against people, and people fight against each other. But all this disorder and disruption is a revelation of God's wrath against human sin. This is what the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments teach. From Genesis 3:17-19 we learn that the thorns and thistles in the field and everything that hinders and harms and takes away man's food is a consequence and punishment of sin. The apostle teaches us in Romans 8:19-23 that the corruption that has invaded nature is caused by man's sin. And the death of man,

this terrible fact that body and soul are torn apart, that man, who is created for life, dies: this does not come from matter or from a necessary metabolism, as foolish philosophers fantasize, but from sin and from God's wrath against sin, as is so clearly and movingly described in Psalm 90:7-8: "This is your wrath that we should perish, and your anger that we should perish so suddenly. For you set our iniquity before you, our unrecognized sin in the light of your countenance." That there are wars, that fire, water and storms rage against man and his possessions, that the earth trembles, that pestilence and famine afflict mankind, these are all revelations of God's wrath against man's sin. And all these things should bring home to us the fact that we need reconciliation with God. That is why we should not pass by these things thoughtlessly, but heed them as proclaimers of God's wrath against our sins. Luther does this forcefully throughout his writings. Just read, for example, what Luther says about Genesis 3:16-17 (St. L. I, 249 ff., 255; AE 1, 204, 208) [Luther quotes are missing in Mueller's translation:]: "The philosophers have wondered where this disorder in nature would come from. ... After all, all creatures are directed against us and almost prepared for our destruction. How many of them perish by fire and water? How dangerous are wild and poisonous animals, which not only harm our bodies, but also that which is grown for our food! Not to mention that we ourselves also fall on each other and strangle [each other], as if there were no other pestilence and misfortune creeping after us. And what is the whole of life but a daily quarrel, deceit, robbery and murder, if you look at the nobility and trade of the people among themselves.... Therefore we live knowingly and with seeing eyes in a more than Egyptian darkness. And although we are reminded everywhere and by all creatures of God's wrath and it stings our eyes, we pay no attention to it, but love this temporal life and cling to it as if it were our only pleasure." Concerning Genesis 3:18, Luther summarizes what has been said before in this way (St. L. I, 255 f.; AE 1, 209): "Here again we are told that the earth of things bears none of itself, but for the sake of Adam's sin; as he has plainly said above: 'for your sake'. Whenever, therefore, we see thistles and thorns, weeds and the like in the fields and gardens, we should remember, as from certain signs, the sins and wrath of God. And so it is not only in the Church that we hear from God's Word that we are sinners, but the whole land, indeed the whole of creation, is full of such preachers who reproach us with our sins and the wrath of God aroused by our sins. Therefore we should diligently pray that God would remove such a great hardening from our eyes, minds and hearts

that after so many reminders of our sins, we would at least once lay aside our security and live in the fear of God. For this is why we are pressed down and burdened in so many ways with the malediction."

We live in "the age of newspapers". [Now the Internet.] We read daily of misfortunes, of war and bloodshed, of robbery and murder. We Christians should not read such things thoughtlessly and merely from the point of view of news, but we should pause while reading, fold our hands and consider what a tremendous revelation of God's wrath against the sin of mankind confronts us from the newspaper reports. Our reading of the newspaper will then take place with sighs and supplications to God and with heartfelt pleas and intercession: "O God, have mercy on us and all sinners!"

Here we must point out a trick of the devil, whereby he wants to lead us to cultivate self-righteousness instead of repentance on the occasion of the plagues in nature and in human life. He succeeds in this trick with us if we want to think that the misfortune that comes upon individuals, regions and countries is not a sermon of repentance for us and all people. Our Savior gives us a clear lesson on this point in Luke 13:1-5, following two events of the day. Galileans had been killed by Pilate at the sacrifice, and eighteen persons had been slain by the falling tower of Siloam. On this occasion the Lord warns against the judgment of self-righteousness, as if these people had been sinners before others and had therefore been punished before others. Rather, the Lord adds the instruction that misfortunes bring to light what all people deserve because of their sins. He says: "Unless you amend your ways, you will all likewise perish." We should also bear this in mind in the war that raged in the world. [World War I] Of course, this war was a terrible punishment, initially for the peoples concerned. But we should not play the self-righteous Pharisee and consider ourselves better than those affected by the misery of war. Rather, we should consider that we are in the same debt before God and that the same punishments would also have to be inflicted on us if God wanted to deal with us according to our merits. However, in Germany, the land of the Reformation, the contempt for the Word of God is great. It receives the punishment of its sins. But what about us? Our country is the land of lodges that deny the crucified Christ. In our country the pope is spreading, who sits in the temple of God as a god and pretends to be God. In our country, those who call themselves Lutherans call the pure Lutheran doctrine "*the disturbing element*". And what about us so-called Missourians? We certainly have an excellent church system. We have God's Word as abundant, pure and loud as

in the apostles' time. But have we cherished the Word, heard and read it diligently, and spread it with real zeal? Oh, how much indifference, indolence and complacency that provokes God's wrath can be found among us!

The disruption and disorder in nature and in human society are preachers of God's wrath from outside. But people have a much, much clearer and more terrible preacher of wrath against sin within themselves. This is the conscience, or more precisely: the evil conscience. The evil conscience is the awareness of the terrible fact that God, the great, majestic God, is angry with the sinner. Luther says in his commentary on Isaiah: "Sin is immediately followed by an evil conscience." (Erlangen Ed. 22, 41) Man is wonderfully made by God. The sin that man commits automatically registers itself within him. It registers in the heart and conscience of man as guilt before God, as recognition of God's wrath against sin, in short, as an evil conscience. We can call this process automatic because it is an effect of sin that we cannot prevent. Just as a so-called cash register registers the sum received, so the conscience registers the sin committed as guilt before God. This is what Luther means when he says: "Sin is immediately followed by an evil conscience." You can argue against this with words, you can resolve: I want to forget my sin, put it aside. But that doesn't help; the evil conscience remains. Prof. Ritschl of Göttingen and his followers have said that there is no wrath of God over human sin. Others have said that the evil conscience, the consciousness of guilt, is an acquired prejudice. But these people have not eliminated the evil conscience either in themselves or in others with such talk. This is shown by Ritschl's own example, as we shall see later. — The rationalists of all times have said that although God does not like sin, he is not so angry with people that he condemns them eternally. But even the rationalists have not put a single conscience to rest with their speeches. The consciousness of guilt in man does not give way to human demonstrations. — American sectarian preachers of our time often speak of a "fatherhood" of God and a "brotherhood of all men". They want to say that all people can raise their eyes to God with peace of mind and expect that God will show himself to them as Father without the reconciliation brought about by the blood of Christ. But these are just sayings that do not remove the evil conscience from the world. The human conscience is an incorruptible bookkeeper of people's sins. Suppose the creature were silent, and suppose there were no law of God revealed in Scripture: if we

look only to ourselves, our conscience cries out to us: "You are guilty before God, God is angry with you!" So it was with Adam. When Adam sinned, the fact registered in his conscience. Involuntarily, he tried to hide from God. It is the same with all people. It is still the same with us Christians. The sin we commit also registers in our conscience as guilt before God. Thank God — to anticipate this — thank God that we know about the precious blood of Christ, the only means of quenching the evil conscience! Therefore we dare not go to bed with an evil conscience, but we pray [according to the German]:

Have I done wrong today,
Dear God, don't look at it!
Your grace and Christ's blood
Makes up for all the damage.

The evil conscience remains even in those who confess with their mouth that they deny God. [I.e. “God is dead”] There are atheists only in word, but not in deed, as our old theologians say. The conscience, that preacher within oneself, can be partially and for a time muzzled. One can, as St. Paul says, "endure the truth through unrighteousness". But in the end, if the person is not suddenly carried away in his artificial blindness, this inner preacher breaks through all the barriers that have been artificially drawn for him and pronounces judgment with a voice of thunder: You are a debtor before God, you are damned! We have examples of this in people like Voltaire, *) [*) Weseloh, "Gottes Wort eine Gotteskraft", p. 34] [Heinrich] Heine †) [†) A. a. O., p. 37] and others. These mockers and blasphemers of all things holy silenced the inner preacher for a time, especially through a life of sin and shame. But at the hour of their death, the evil conscience asserted itself. It is moving to read the exclamations of anguish and despair with which Voltaire died. Even the doctors withdrew in horror. Heine, a gifted but godless German writer, recanted and cursed his earlier godlessness on his deathbed. However, it remains questionable whether he died a Christian.

The heathen have also always heard this voice of the inner preacher. God's clear word testifies to this. The apostle Paul describes the Gentiles in Romans 1:32 as people "who know the righteousness of God, that those who practice these things" (namely sin) "are worthy of death". Furthermore, Romans 2:15 states that the Gentiles "prove that the work of the law is written in their hearts, as their conscience testifies, and also their thoughts, which accuse or excuse one another". Heathen writers also testify to this with words.

Plutarch, for example, has a sick pagan exclaim: "Let me, O man, the accursed, the gods and demons hated, suffer my punishment!" (Luthardt, Apol. II, 213.) The pagans also testify to this with their works, namely with their attempts to reconcile God through sacrifices and services. The pagans are very serious about these attempts. For the purpose of satisfying their evil conscience, we find extreme self-torture, the sacrifice of their children, the sacrifice of their own person through suicide. So much for conscience as a preacher of the fact that we need reconciliation with God.

But above all, God proclaims in his revealed Word his wrath against the sin of men. Scripture proclaims a wrath of God over sin that we cannot even imagine, a wrath that, as the hymn says, "makes my heart tremble with fear and my tongue stick to the roof of my mouth"; a wrath so terrible that we would die instantly if we could feel it fully, as Luther reminds us. Let us think of the divine revelation of wrath in the Flood, in the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah, in the destruction of Jerusalem. God, the holy and majestic God, and sinful man are the greatest opposites; they go together even less than fire and water. Luther explains: As long as sin is in man, God cannot have fellowship with man; the whole of divine holiness and righteousness sets itself against it.

But how does this relate to the situation we see before us in the world? When we see the injustice spreading in the world and the Church, we might well come up with thoughts like these: God can't be that serious about sin, otherwise he would strike with thunder and lightning. But let us remember that the world is still under the sign of divine sparing. Because Christ has atoned for the sins of the whole world, and he still wants to gather a church out of the world, he is still holding back his judgment. But we should not think that God condones sin because he has not yet struck. It remains true: "For thou art not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness: neither shall evil dwell with thee", Psalm 5:4, and: "The face of the Lord is against them that do evil", Psalm 34:16. The curse in Deuteronomy chapters 27 and 28 are also still read with benefit as an expression of God's wrath against sin. We also read the same judgment of God upon sin in the New Testament. Regardless of whether a person sins consciously or unconsciously, Galatians 3:10 says: "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the Book of the Law to do them." The Savior says that even a useless word is subject to God's judgment, Matt. 12:36. The Savior also expressly points out that this curse does not only have an effect here on earth. He speaks of an

eternal place of punishment for sin, where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth, Matt. 8:12, where its worm does not die and its fire does not go out, Mark 9:44. This is the terrible revelation of God's wrath against sin in His Word. But the most powerful revelation of God's wrath against sin is that God gives His only begotten Son, to whom He imputed the sin of the whole world, to death. Truly, we humans are in need of reconciliation with God!

Man cannot bring about reconciliation with God on his own.

Although people strive for reconciliation with God, they cannot bring it about themselves. We see a general endeavor among people to reconcile with God, even among pagans. The essence of paganism is not atheism, but the striving to reconcile God through one's own actions. (Apology of the Augsburg Confession, Art. III, § 85 ff.; *Triglotta*, p. 176 f.) The pagan believes in a God, he knows God's will of the law (Rom. 1 and 2), and the pagan, because he has an evil conscience as a result of the knowledge of the will of the law, lets it cost him something to bring about his reconciliation with God. Cicero says: "No people is so wild that it does not know of a God and does not have a worship service." Luther also often refers to the same fact. Of course, the pagans, like the Romans, in their striving for self-reconciliation with God, not only came up with great things, but also with ridiculous things, with childish things. Even in paganism there were prayer machines. The Egyptians believed, says Luther, that they also had to worship cats and mice and honor garlic and onions. (Cf. St. L. II, 1829 [AE 8, 135]) That is childishness. But we must not forget that in many cases the pagans were very serious in their attempts to reconcile God. Let us think of the pagan religious practices in India. To propitiate the deity, the penitents walk hundreds of miles with sharp nails in their shoes, look at the sun until they go blind, let themselves be crushed by the idol chariot. Think of the huge sums of money spent on building temples. There are said to be pagan temples in China that cost 50 million dollars. Let us look at external Christianity, if it has forgotten the gospel. Let us look at monks who, like Luther, take the monastic life seriously. Luther did not go to the monastery to have good days, but to satisfy his awakened conscience through a "holy life" and self-torture, in short, to reconcile himself with God. Monastic life and monastic works still make a great impression on people, even on those who are indifferent in matters of religion. Naturally, people admire those who give the impression of religious seriousness. The world does not despise the religion of works. Only the religion of grace of the Gospel of the crucified Christ is an offense to the Jews and foolishness to the Greeks.

But what about the result of the religion of works, that is, of human efforts to reconcile God? The result is in every case a complete zero. This is what the Scripture says in Romans 3:20: "By the works of the law no flesh will be justified before God." The conclusion with regard to all Gentiles is drawn from Eph. 2:12: They have no hope and live without God in the world. It is said, especially in our time, that God is pleased with the worship of the heathen; he sees the good will; he cannot possibly reject the sincere worship of the heathen. Scripture teaches otherwise in 1 Cor. 10:20: "What the heathen sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils and not to God." Those who seek reconciliation with God through their own actions in external Christianity are just as unsuccessful. The Scripture says Galatians 3:10: "Those who practice the works of the law are under the curse." We have an example of this in Luther. He was truly serious about satisfying his conscience through works; and yet he confesses: "I only fell deeper and deeper into it." God sees only one sacrifice for sin: the sacrifice of Christ.

(To be continued.)

(Continued)

God has reconciled the world to Himself through Christ.

There is a reconciliation of all people with God. Admittedly, this is a reconciliation that no human being has thought of. Even the great spirits among men, the rulers of this world, have not recognized it, as St. Paul says in 1 Cor. 2:8. We only know about this reconciliation through God's revealed Word. From God's Word we learn: God made his eternal, only-begotten Son become man and reconciled the whole world to himself through his actions and suffering. Scripture clearly testifies to this fact. This fact is the actual content of the whole of Holy Scripture. Thus we read 2 Cor. 5:19-21: "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."

Let us visualize what is said in these words. It says: "God was in Christ and reconciled the world to himself." God is the agent here, not people. It was not people who were reconciled to God, but God reconciled people to Himself without people asking him to do so or even knowing about it. A wonderful act of God's love confronts us here. Because people were in need of reconciliation, but could not bring about this reconciliation, God, in his divine love for us lost sinners and in his divine mercy for us poor people, took reconciliation into his own hands and brought it about. But how did God

do this? Through a quite miraculous event. It says: "God was in Christ and reconciled the world to himself." In Christ, God accomplished the reconciliation of the world with himself. God sent his Son into the world by allowing him to become man from the Virgin Mary. Through Him he fulfilled his law given to mankind and had Him pay the penalty that mankind had earned through their transgression of the law. In this wonderful way, God reconciled the world to himself in Christ. Thus we read Gal. 4:4-5: "God sent his Son, born of a woman and put under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as children." Romans 5:10: "We are reconciled to God through the death of his Son." Gal 3:13: "Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us."

And 2 Cor. 5:19 goes on to say what this reconciliation consists of. It does not consist in the fact that people have changed their attitude towards God, as the words have been wrongly interpreted. People knew nothing of this reconciliation. No, reconciliation consists in the fact that God in Christ or for the sake of Christ has changed his attitude towards mankind. It says: "Not imputing their trespasses unto them [men]." Men had sinned and thus deserved God's wrath, and men could not avert this wrath with all that they were and did. But for the sake of Christ, God does not impute their sins to them, that is, he forgives their sins and looks at them as if they had not sinned at all. God has erased people's sins from his record of guilt and has replaced wrath with mercy in his heart. The objection raised against this, that there can be no change of heart in the eternal, unchanging God, is human cleverness. Of course, God is the eternal and unchanging one (Ps. 102:28). But it is also true that we humans cannot have any idea of the eternal and unchanging God, because we humans are bound in our ideas to the succession and coexistence in time and space. That is why God has condescended to our human imagination and in his Word sets apart for us that which is completely one with him in his divine majesty. Scripture leads us to think of God's wrath and grace in this way: God began to be angry when people sinned, and God let go of his wrath against sinners and did not impute their sins to them when Christ lived, suffered and died for mankind (Romans 5:18, 10).

And this reconciliation is a perfect one. First of all, it refers to everything that is sin. It says: "He did not impute their sins to them." So everything that is sin, transgression of the

law of God: our attitude turned away from God, our evil state, the evil thoughts, desires and impulses of our heart, our evil words, our evil works — everything God did not impute to the world, to men; he regarded it as if it had not happened, and struck it out of his register of guilt. The papist doctrine that Christ only paid enough for original sin, but did not also pay in full for real sin, is contrary to Scripture. But the atonement is also perfect in another respect. It says: "God did not impute their sins to them." "To them", that is, to the world, to the whole human world. Reconciliation is perfect when we look at the mind of God: in God's heart, forgiveness of sin has taken the place of imputation of sin, and grace has taken the place of wrath. But reconciliation is also complete when we look at its outward extension. It extends to the whole human world. The Calvinist doctrine that God has reconciled only a part of mankind to himself is contrary to Scripture. We have no right to restrict the term "world" and understand it to mean only the "elect". Moreover, 1 John 2:2 explicitly states: "Christ is the propitiation not only for our sins, but also for the sins of the whole world."

But there is another very important fact. This reconciliation is behind us, it has happened, it is an accomplished fact. "God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself." These words refer to the time when the Son of God lived and died on earth. At the time when Christ lived, suffered and died on earth, almost 1900 [now 2000] years ago, God reconciled the world to Himself. At that time, when God raised Christ from the dead, he absolved the world of its guilt of sin, he declared that he no longer had anything against the world of sinners. For this is how the apostle Romans 4:25 juxtaposes the death and resurrection of Christ: "Who was delivered for our offenses and was raised again for our justification."

And further: This wonderful fact, that God reconciled the world to Himself, God did not keep to Himself, locked away in His heart, but God now reveals this fact to the world through the word of reconciliation, through the gospel. This continues in the words: "And hath committed unto us the Word of Reconciliation", of the reconciliation that is not only to happen in the future, when people change, repent and believe, but which has happened. According to Scripture, we call this message of reconciliation that has happened the gospel, the good news. That is why Acts 20:24 calls the gospel "the gospel of the grace of God", Eph. 6:15 "the gospel of peace", and that is why the preachers of the gospel are called people who have lovely feet, who proclaim peace, Rom. 10:15. Just as the angels sang the words at Christmas: "Peace on

earth!" — The word of reconciliation is grossly distorted not only by the papists, but also by most of the so-called Protestants of our time. They present the matter as if people first had to reconcile God completely through their repentance or faith. No! God is reconciled with the world, and the world is reconciled with God before any change that takes place in men, before any inner transformation, even before repentance and faith. — Of course, the Christian church also has to reveal the wrath of God over the sin of men by preaching the law in order to convince people of their guilt. But the real message that the Christian church has to bring to the world is that through Christ God's wrath against sin has been abolished. The Christian church is to proclaim this fact to the world and to call, provoke and entice people to believe in it, as it goes on to say: "Now, then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us; we pray you in Christ's stead, Be ye reconciled to God!" There is no longer any room for the teaching that people still have to make amends for their sins before God through their own actions. The apostle concludes 2 Cor 5:21 thus: "For He hath made Him to be sin for us who knew no sin that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him."

The fact of the reconciliation of the whole world through Christ is also taught in all Scripture passages in which it is said that Christ offered Himself as an atoning sacrifice for the world. Eph. 5:2: "Christ loved us and gave himself for us as a gift and sacrifice, a sweet savor to God." According to Heb 7:27, Christ offered a sacrifice to God for the people's sin, but "he did this once when he offered himself". Heb. 9:12: "Christ entered once into the holy place by his own blood, having obtained eternal redemption." The passage in Hebrews distinguishes between Christ and the priests of the Old Testament. The priests of the Old Testament, because they themselves were sinners, offered animals prescribed by God as sacrifices. But Christ differs from the priests of the Old Testament in that he does not offer animals, but himself, in his own blood, as a sacrifice to God for the sins of the whole world. Everything is summarized in John 1:29: "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world."

This is the fact of the reconciliation of the whole world of mankind through Christ! On the basis of this fact, every person in the whole world, including each one of us, can and should be certain that he is already reconciled with God through Christ. There are many lies in the world, and occasionally the question has been raised as to which is the greatest lie. The greatest lie that is and can be uttered here on earth

is when someone tells me that I am not reconciled to God through Christ's blood. It is sad enough that the devil has led us into sin and brought God's judgment of wrath upon us. But now we do not want to do the devil the favor of believing the lie that we are not reconciled to God through Christ. The Romans [Catholic Church] in particular come here with a whole series of objections. They are very interested in the fact that no one believes that he is reconciled to God through Christ. That would spoil the whole fair for them. They call it "impertinence" if someone thinks that God is completely gracious to him for the sake of Christ. They object: 1) "Your name is not in the Bible. You would have to have a special revelation from God if you wanted to be sure that you are reconciled to God." Answer: In Scripture we have the necessary revelation from God. The word "world" is divine revelation. This revelation is more sure and certain than if my name were in the Bible. If it depended on my name being mentioned in Scripture, then I would first have to search for my name among many names; and since many people have the same name, I could not be sure in the end whether I or a namesake was meant. Luther says on John 1:29: You are a part of the world, therefore you are reconciled to God, because Christ is the Lamb of God who bore the sin of the world. — The Romans interject 2): "You do not know whether your repentance is deep enough." To this it must be said: Where is it written that God forgives sin for the sake of human repentance? God is already completely reconciled with us before our repentance for the sake of Christ. Of course, repentance must precede faith. But the forgiveness of sins is not based on our repentance, but solely on Christ's perfect work of reconciliation. — What the Romans still teach about a necessary confession before the "priest" and about satisfactions that the priest determines, is contrary to God's Word, in the interest of priestly rule, devised to enslave souls and dishonor Christ. All necessary satisfaction for sin has been made by Christ once and for all.

A more detailed description of the divine method of reconciliation.

In the Christian church, the term "vicarious satisfaction" (satisfactio vicaria) was also used to describe the way in which the reconciliation of the world with God came about. Luther also used this expression. In his "Christian Questions", the answer to the question: "Why should we remember and proclaim Christ's death?" is: "That we may learn to believe that no creature can make satisfaction for our sins except Christ, true God and man."

And the following question is: "What then moved Christ to die for your sins and to make satisfaction for them?" This "vicarious satisfaction" is particularly unacceptable in our time. War has been declared on this expression. [E.g. by Gerhard O. Forde.] Of course, the expression is not found in Scripture. But the thing designated by the expression is the teaching of Holy Scripture. The meaning of the expression is that Christ, in the place of mankind, has substituted for God, who was angry at the sins of mankind, that by which God's wrath against mankind is transformed into grace towards mankind. All these thoughts are clearly expressed in Scripture. We must hold on the basis of Scripture:

1. There is in God an inviolable holiness and justice, according to which he requires of all men and of every individual man a perfect conformity to his law, and is angry with transgressors to the extent that he eternally rejects them from his presence, that is, eternally condemns them. God has prescribed to all his creatures the paths in which they must move. The sun, moon and stars do not move in arbitrary orbits, but in the orbits that God has prescribed for them. If a star is thrown out of its orbit, it perishes. Man is a very special creature of God. He is a rational creature, a personality or a moral being. Man has thoughts, words and works. So God has also given man a special law to abide by. Man cannot think, speak or do as he pleases. Rather, God has prescribed to him how his heart should relate to God and how his thoughts, words and works should be. Christ summarizes the sum of the law given to man in Matt. 22:37-40: "Thou shalt love the Lord, thy God, with all thy heart and with all thy soul and with all thy mind . . . and thy neighbor as thyself." If a person does not do this, it is terrible. If a star is thrown out of its orbit and has to perish, this is a moderate pity, because the whole edifice of the world will collapse on Judgment Day anyway. But man is created for eternity, and if he is thrown out of his orbit, that is, if he does not fully abide by God's law, then he lives on, but as one eternally cast out from God's presence. And that is a state of the greatest torment for him. Man can only be blessed in fellowship with his God, his Creator. If he has to live banished from God's presence, he is outside his element of life, in a state like a fish that, pulled out of the water and thrown onto land, writhes in convulsions. In Gal. 3:10 the Holy Spirit speaks through the apostle Paul the terrible word: "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the Book of the Law to do them!" This results in a

terrible situation for people, because they have all become transgressors: they are called children of wrath (Eph. 2:3), all the world is guilty before God (Rom. 3:19). And this terrible situation extends, as we have already seen, into eternity. Christ speaks in Mark 9:46 of the worm that does not die and of the fire that does not go out, and in Matt. 8:12 of the utter darkness where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth. Yes, this is how the Son of God Himself speaks of the demanding and punishing holiness and justice of God. What is to become of us now? Is this how the whole human race is to end? No! Now comes salvation, and in a way that no man has thought of or could think of. And that is the second thought contained in the expression "vicarious satisfaction".

2. How does salvation come to people? Not in such a way that God simply drew a line under the demands of his justice and his judgment. No, not in this way! Salvation comes in such a way that God has made his incarnate Son our, human, substitute before his forum. Christ does what we should have done and suffers what we should have suffered. This is written in many passages of Scripture. Gal. 4:4-5: "God sent his Son, born of a woman and put under the law." Gal 3:13: "Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us." 1 Cor. 15:3: "Christ died for our sins." 2 Cor. 5:14: One died for all. 1 Pet. 3:18: Christ suffered for our sins, the righteous for the unrighteous. — Christians speak of their "dear Savior". And truly, their Savior is a "dear Savior"! Let us compare our Savior with other so-called founders of religions who have beguiled and continue to beguile people. Confucius, Buddha, Mohammed, the Pope, the Unitarians and all the teachers of works impose burdens on people. They all instruct man that he must reconcile God through his own actions. They impose a burden on people that neither they themselves nor any human being can bear. Christ, on the other hand, approached the matter differently: he does not place the slightest burden on people, does not make the slightest demands for the attainment of salvation, but has taken the whole burden from people and placed it on his own shoulders. He took upon himself the law given to man in order to fulfill it in man's place in a life of thirty-three years. He took upon himself the full force of divine wrath, the punishment that men had forfeited by breaking the law, in order to pay for it through his own suffering and death.

3. The fact that Christ took the place of man with His actions and suffering means that the whole world of mankind is reconciled with God. God is satisfied through Christ's work. God's holiness and justice have been satisfied. God no longer imputes man's sins to him. God has lifted his

judgment of condemnation on mankind. He pronounces them righteous for the sake of Christ's work, as if they had fulfilled the whole law and never transgressed a commandment. The gospel is preached in the world for the forgiveness of sins. This is also the meaning of baptism; it is for the remission of sins, Acts 2:38. And what is the purpose of Holy Communion but that we are assured by the offering of the body and blood of our Saviour: The debt is paid in full? Thus also are the clear and precious words of God in Romans 5:18: "Through one" — namely Christ's — "righteousness the justification of life has come upon all men." Rom. 5:10: "We are reconciled to God through the death of his Son." Romans 4:25: "Christ was delivered up for our sins and raised for our justification."

This is the scriptural doctrine of reconciliation through the vicarious satisfaction of Christ. The concept of vicarious satisfaction, as Luther and our theologians use it, is fully grounded in Scripture.

The human criticism of the divine method of reconciliation.

We now come to an extremely sad chapter, the saddest chapter in the history of mankind. People need reconciliation with God, but cannot achieve it themselves. Out of grace and mercy, God has reconciled mankind with himself through the actions and suffering of his Son (satisfactio vicaria). And now people are not satisfied with this reconciliation! They criticize the divine method of reconciliation in many different ways. They call it unnecessary, unworthy of God, contradictory, completely unjust, inadequate or not covering the matter, too external or too legalistic. This criticism is appalling, blasphemous, even insane. But it has always been practiced and is still practiced today, not only by outspoken Unitarians like Dr. Eliot (Harvard), but also by so-called positive theologians and even within communities that call themselves Lutheran. Thus the *Independent* (*L. u. W.* 1916, p. 181) wrote: "The great majority of Christian teachers have abandoned this view" (namely the doctrine of reconciliation through Christ's satisfaction). “A generation of Christians is growing up who have never heard that Christ's death was an atoning sacrifice. Christianity does not require us to view Christ's death as if he had reconciled the Father, whose love needs no revival or encouragement. No atoning sacrifice is necessary. God is perfectly able to forgive out of the store of his love." — This is not only the position of those communities that explicitly call themselves Unitarian. In a conversation about the statistics of the various church communities in the United States, a Unitarian said: "Don't think that

we only have half a million members! We have our members in other Protestant churches." That is unfortunately true. Probably the majority of Congregationalist, Baptist, Episcopalian, and even Presbyterian preachers are Unitarians, that is, they reject the doctrine of reconciliation through Christ's satisfaction. They see the essence of Christianity not in the belief in Christ crucified for the sins of the world, but in the endeavor to keep the commandments of God. They have the religion of the lodges. The lodges think they can set aside Christ crucified as the only Savior and reconcile God through their own supposed virtue. And we must not think that our church members will not also be affected by this poisonous atmosphere.

Lest we also be deceived, let us examine the main objections that have been raised against reconciliation through Christ's satisfaction and judge them according to Scripture.

First objection: Reconciliation through Christ's actions and suffering is completely **unnecessary**. God, as supreme judge, can forgive sin and be merciful by virtue of his divine power even without Christ's satisfaction. We answer: It is futile and foolish to want to argue about whether God can do something when God has revealed to us in his Word what he wants to do and actually does. Now God says in his Word that he forgives sin "through the redemption that is by Christ Jesus", Rom. 3:24; that we are "reconciled to God through the death of his Son", Rom. 5:10; that we are "redeemed by the precious blood of Christ", 1 Pet. 1:18; that Christ is "the one mediator between God and men", because he "gave himself for all to redeem", 1 Tim. 2:6; that "Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us", Gal. 3:13. Thus the question of whether God is gracious to mankind even without Christ's satisfaction is settled once and for all, removed from discussion, "it is not an open question, but a *closed* question". God points all the world to Christ. God is a gracious Father to those who accept Him in faith. Whoever does not accept the crucified Christ as his Savior, God the Father does not want to know anything about him either. "Whoever denies the Son does not have the Father either," 1 John 2:23. Luther says, "Now God wants to give it to you through the humanity of Christ," that is, for the sake of Christ's deeds and suffering, "who are you, arrogant, ungrateful devil, to ask why he does not do it in another way and without the way? Wilt thou set and choose his ways and measures? Thou shouldst leap for joy that he will do it in whatever way he pleases, only that thou mayest obtain it." (St. L. XX, 882 f.) All who wish to set aside Christ's atoning sacrifice are outside the Christian Church. Their faith is like the faith of the Turks, Jews and heathen. Luther says (St. L. XI, 1085): "I have often said before that

faith alone is not enough for God, but the cost" — the vicarious satisfaction — "must also be there. The Turk and the Jew also believe in God, but without means and without cost." "So what is the cost? That is what the Gospel indicates. … Christ teaches here that we are not lost, but have eternal life, that is, that God loved us, so that he made it cost his own dearest child, whom he put into our misery, hell and death, and let him drink it up. This is the way to be saved." Chemnitz (Harm. Ev., c. 28, p. 152): "Apart from Christ there is no grace and mercy of God towards sinners, and grace must not and cannot be thought of apart from Christ." We must also keep this in mind in the fight against the lodges. The lodges have many sinful things about them. But the main harm is that they set aside Christ as the only Savior of sinners. They say that every man can be saved in his own way, through his faith. Therefore no Christian community can make peace with the lodges. Insofar as lodges practice religion, it is this: People can be saved without Christ.

Second objection: It is an unworthy conception of God to portray him as so angry with sinners that he could only be reconciled through the vicarious suffering and death of his Son. To this we say: It is nonsensical and blasphemous arrogance for us humans to presume to determine what is worthy or unworthy of God. We humans can only learn what worthy or unworthy ideas of God are from God's revealed word. But God's revelation in His Word is first of all that God is angry with sinners. "God's wrath from heaven is revealed against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men", Rom. 1:18. "Cursed be everyone", Gal. 3:10. Secondly, God's revelation in his Word is: "We are reconciled to God through the death of his Son", Rom. 5:10. "Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us", Gal. 3:13. These are the right thoughts of God. He tells us two things in his word: 1. I am angry with the sin of men; 2. I am reconciled to sinners through the blood of my Son. Thank God that we are allowed to have these ideas of God!

Third objection: In the mission of his Son and especially in the death of his Son, God revealed his love for mankind. Therefore, there can be no question of reconciling God's wrath through the death of Christ. Answer: According to Scripture, both the love and the wrath of God are revealed in the mission and death of Christ. When Scripture says that we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son while we were still enemies (Rom. 5:10), it is saying that through Christ's death

the wrath of God against the world of sinners has ceased or been satisfied. In the same fact the love of God is revealed, because his great love moved God to do for his righteousness through the death of his Son what was impossible for us humans. "In this is love, ... that God loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins", 1 John 4:10.

Fourth objection: It would be unjust of God to allow the innocent Christ to be cursed and punished instead of guilty people. Answer: Everything that God does is just. But what God has done in this case, he tells us clearly in His Word. And this is twofold: on the one hand, God has imputed our, man's, guilt to Christ, 2 Cor. 5:21: "God made him who knew no sin to be sin for us"; and on the other hand, God made the innocent Christ suffer for us guilty people, 1 Pet. 3:18: "Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the Just for the unjust." We can therefore be completely reassured about the justice of the divine process. The criticism practiced measures the great God by human standards.

Here a warning against rational proofs of the justice of the divine procedure is in order. It must, of course, be admitted that the idea of substitution is not unheard of in civil life either. Ancient teachers have already pointed to some examples, e.g. to Codrus, the last king of Athens, who, in order to save his people, gave himself up to death in the war with the Spartans; also to the two Deciuses, father and son, Roman consuls, who voluntarily consecrated themselves to death in order to save their fatherland; finally to Zaleucus, legislator of the Locrians in southern Italy, who had an eye put out in place of his son. But it is not necessary to use such examples to prove the justice of the divine procedure in Christ's punitive suffering. The only convincing proof is: "It is written." Human reason will always raise new objections if the vicarious suffering of Christ is subjected to its judgment. This also applies to the reason that Christ voluntarily suffered death in man's place. Some of our old dogmatists also place too much weight on this argument. However, Christ was not forced, but voluntarily took the place of man. This is expressly testified to in John 10:17: "Therefore my Father loves me, that I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of myself." The Unitarians immediately have the objection ready that we declare unjust any earthly judge who, in place of a criminal sentenced to death, would declare an innocent person who voluntarily offers himself guilty and punish him with death. In the administration of civil justice, we allow representation

in cases of monetary guilt, but not in cases of moral guilt. We only keep solid ground under our feet if we refer to God's Word alone for the justice of divine action in the substitution of Christ. Thank God that we are allowed to do this! And instead of accusing God of injustice, we should reverently worship God and thank Him for this love, that He did not spare His own innocent Son in order to save us who are guilty. Let us also learn here that a Christian's faith should be based solely on God's Word.

Fifth objection: Christ actually did not suffer what men should have suffered, and therefore one cannot speak of a vicarious satisfaction. Prof. Luthardt says that Christ's satisfaction should not be referred to as "mutual reckoning". Prof. Frank of Erlangen judges that it was an "aberration" of the old theologians when they taught that Christ endured the punishment that people should have suffered. Answer: According to Scripture, Christ endured the punishment that mankind should have suffered. According to Gal. 4:4-5, Christ fulfilled the law given to man; Gal. 3:10, God pronounces a curse on every man who does not keep the law; but v. 13 says: Christ became a curse for us. The calculation is therefore completely correct according to divine reckoning. — The further objection has been raised that Christ did not suffer eternally, but only for a time. Even if Christ suffered for thirty-three years, thirty-three years is still not eternity. That is of course correct. But the Scriptures take another factor into account in the calculation: the high person of the sufferer. The blood of Jesus Christ is not the blood of a mere man, but the blood of the Son of God, 1 John 1:7; God's own blood, Acts 20:28. If He who is the Son of God suffers only for a time and was forsaken by God only for a short time, then this weighs as much and even more than if all men had suffered for eternity. Thus, according to divine arithmetic, the calculation is really quite exact. God looks at the high person. "His blood, the noble sap, has such strength and power" etc. (Hymn 230, v. 9.)

Sixth objection: The whole process of thinking God reconciled through Christ's vicarious satisfaction is too "juridical" and not "ethical" (moral) enough. This is also the view of the so-called "positives" among recent theologians. When the Erlangen theologian von Hofmann raised this objection to the Christian doctrine of reconciliation and denied the vicarious penal suffering of Christ, Theodosius Harnack replied very correctly: "If it [the doctrine of reconciliation of the Lutheran confession] should be reproached for having allowed a legalistic

approach to world reconciliation with the concept of satisfaction, then this reproach, insofar as it is justified, falls back on Scripture. ... The representation of our symbols can therefore only be removed after the concepts of the righteousness and holiness of God, the law and conscience, guilt, punishment and judgment, the mediator, the ransom, and imputation have first been removed from Scripture." (Das Bekenntnis d. luth. K. v. d. Versöhnung etc. Erl. 1857, p. 139.) So it really is. According to Holy Scripture, the reconciliation of the world took place in a thoroughly juridical way. Its prerequisite is juridical, namely the demand of the law upon men (Matt. 22:37): "Thou shalt love God thy Lord") and the curse of the law that befalls the transgressors (Gal. 3:10). The subjection of Christ to the law given to man is legal, because Christ was the Lord of the law for His person (Matt. 12:8). Juridical is the transfer of our guilt and punishment to Christ, because Christ knew of no sin (2 Cor. 5:21). The execution of punishment is legal because the righteous suffered for the unrighteous (1 Peter 3:18). Thank God that up to now everything has been purely juridical, for now it continues purely juridically. Now God does not impute the sins of the whole world of mankind purely juridically (2 Cor. 5:19), but declares them righteous (Rom. 5:18; 4:25), and so we are justified before God purely juridically by faith without works of the law (Rom. 3:28). Whoever wants to push aside the purely "juridical" character of reconciliation and justification and instead mix the so-called "ethical character", that is, human morality, human improvement, into reconciliation with God, is thereby overturning the whole of Christianity and not allowing people to come to reconciliation with God.

All critics of the reconciliation that took place through Christ refute themselves.

If a person criticizes God, he can be sure that he — the critic — is a great fool. Thus the criticism of the divine method of reconciliation also proves to be foolish if we look at the success of human substitutes. All substitutes that are used for the redemption that took place through Christ are practically useless and do not bring peace to a single conscience. The consciousness of guilt in the human heart is a terrible reality. It is an indictment written by God in the heart, behind which stands the full force of divine holiness and justice; 1 Peter 1:16: "You shall be holy, for I am holy." The Rocky Mountains have their existence through the divine omnipotence, the consciousness of guilt of sinful people through the force of divine holiness and justice. The consciousness of guilt is not dependent on the will of man. Admittedly, man's conscience is clouded after the fall into sin.

Only on the Last Day will the sense of guilt be complete, when the cry is heard: Ye mountains, fall on us; and ye hills, cover us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb! (Luke 23; Revelation 6; Hos. 10.) But the handwriting of guilt is already written by God's hand in the heart of man in this life, and it remains there until God Himself, through the effect of faith in the blood of Christ, blots out this guilt. God must remove his judgment of condemnation from our conscience by substituting his judgment of justification for the judgment of condemnation through the effect of faith in Christ.

That all critics are put to shame by their human substitutes for divine reconciliation, let us consider a few examples. We see that such people, who throughout their lives denied and fought against the vicarious satisfaction of Christ, finally at the hour of death, when their conscience awoke, took refuge solely in the blood of Christ, that is, in the vicarious satisfaction of Christ. The Arminian [Hugo] Grotius († 1645), who in his life denied the doctrine that Christ had done enough for divine justice in the place of men, and wanted Christ's death to be regarded only as an example of punishment and a means of deterrence (Governmental Theory), died on the Lutheran, that is, on the scriptural doctrine of reconciliation under the pastoral care of the Lutheran theologian Joh. Quistorp sen. († 1648). This is reported by Trench in *The Parables of Our Lord* on Luke 18:9-14 [p. 506]. Horace Bushnell († 1876), representative of the "Moral Influence Theory", dies with the words: "O Lord Jesus, I trust for mercy only in the shed blood that Thou didst offer on Calvary." Ritschl († 1889), who in his life had criticized Paul Gerhardt's hymn "O Haupt voll Blut und Wunden" [“O Sacred Head Now Wounded”; *TLH* 172, vv. 9-10] as unworthy of God, had his son read the last two verses of this hymn to him on his deathbed: "Wenn ich einmal soll scheiden" etc., and: "Erscheine mir zum Schilde" etc. Cf. Strong, *Syst. Theol.,* p. 739 sq. Duke George of Saxony († 1539), a furious enemy of the Reformation and fighter against Luther, liked to speak of the "Wittenberg heresy pit". But his confession on his deathbed reads: "O help me, O faithful Savior, Jesus Christ, have mercy on me and save me through your bitter suffering and death!" Thus it is: everything that is put in the place of vicarious satisfaction is practically useless. Only this one thing is practically usable:

> Jesus, Thy blood and righteousness
> My beauty are, my glorious dress;
> So clothed, before my God I’ll stand
> When I shall reach the heavenly land. [Cp. *TLH* 371, v 1]

Everything else does not comfort, but ultimately drives to despair. All human activity and all human argumentation is in vain

in the face of the fact of God's wrath. We are reconciled with God solely through what Christ did and suffered in our place. God grant by grace that we may hold to it in simple faith! We pray with our fathers (Hymn 90:8):

At last, when the horror of death
All knowledge from me drives,
So let my eyes behold
This consolation that endures forever:
Jesus' suffering, cross and agony
Shall be my last knowledge.

(Conclusion follows.)

(Conclusion.)

Man becomes a partaker of reconciliation with God when he believes the reconciliation brought about by Christ.

The reconciliation of the human world through Christ is a perfect reconciliation. It is, to use an ecclesiastical expression, an objective reconciliation. The expression briefly summarizes the scriptural truths that the whole human world is reconciled with God through Christ's work of reconciliation, namely through Christ's vicarious fulfilment of the law and through Christ's vicarious suffering of punishment. Christ has done and paid for everything that God demands of man in his law. There is nothing more to be paid by mankind. For the sake of the payment that Christ made in man's place almost nineteen hundred [now 2000] years ago, God has absolved the world of man all guilt in his heart. To use a business expression, God, to use a business term, is not only partially reconciled to us men through Christ, but one hundred per cent. But after the apostle Paul said in 2 Cor. 5:19: "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them", he adds: "and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation". From this it is clear that God has ordained that the word of reconciliation, which is established through Christ, should be proclaimed to people and believed by them.

However, faith on the part of man is necessary.

Mark 16:16 not only says: "Preach the gospel to every creature", but also adds: "He who believes and is baptized will be saved." Only those who believe the gospel will share in the salvation acquired by Christ. Scripture does not reveal anything else to us. The fact that faith is necessary on the part of man in order to partake of the grace and salvation acquired by Christ is also expressed

in the special missionary command that the apostle Paul received through the appearance of Christ (Acts 26:15-18) [from Luther's German]: "Arise and stand on your feet. For to this end have I appeared unto thee, that I should ordain thee a minister and a witness of those things which thou hast seen, and which I will yet make to appear unto thee. And I will deliver you from the people and from the Gentiles, among whom I am sending you now to open their eyes, so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God, to receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance together with those who are being sanctified through faith in me." The necessity of faith has always been the subject of human thought. Even in our own time it has been taught that because the world has been reconciled to God through Christ, we may well assume that God will accept such pagans who have lived virtuously without faith in the gospel. Modern Lutheran theologians have also expressed this idea of man, 1) [1) For example, von Hofmann, *Schriftbeweis* (2) I, 568 f.] At the time of the Reformation, it was the so-called humanists, the admirers of pagan education, who granted salvation to pagans on the basis of their wisdom and virtue, without faith in Christ. Zwingli also did this, and even Luther was rumored to approve of Zwingli's teaching in this piece. Luther protested against this with the following words: "Zwingli recently wrote that Numa Pompilius, Hector, Scipio and Hercules will also rejoice with Peter and Paul and the other saints in paradise of eternal bliss. Which is nothing else than that they publicly confess that there is no faith and Christianity. For if Scipio and Numa Pompilius, who were idolaters, were saved, why did Christ have to suffer and die? Or what need is there for Christians to be baptized, or for much to be preached about Christ and for people to be pointed to him alone? So dreadfully do the enthusiasts fall away when they abandon and lose God's Word, and know nothing of faith, but hold and teach the same as has been taught in the papacy: "If a man does what is in him, he is thereby saved." 2) [2) St. L. II, 1828 [AE 8, 134]] Because, according to God's order, faith in the reconciliation brought about by Christ is necessary, therefore the preachers of this reconciliation in God's and Christ's stead should exhort and entreat their listeners: "Be reconciled to God!" that is, they should call upon, implore and entice their listeners to believe. Faith in the gospel is necessary.

But only faith is necessary.

Nothing else, no work of man! Because our reconciliation and that of the whole world has come about through what our Savior did and suffered in our place, and this reconciliation is proclaimed in the

word of reconciliation, in the gospel, so that it may be accepted or believed by us, we in turn are fully partakers of reconciliation as soon as faith lights up in our hearts. In the means of grace, in the word of the gospel, in baptism and in the Lord's Supper, God extends his hand of peace to us. Faith, which the Holy Spirit works through the same means, is for our part the hand with which we grasp God's hand of peace. To put it another way: faith in our hearts is the affirmation of the promise of the gospel. Thus it is by faith and by nothing other than faith — that is, by faith alone, sola fide — that we humans become partakers of the reconciliation brought about by Christ. All those who teach that man's own works are still necessary to attain reconciliation with God teach contrary to Scripture, rob Christ of the doctrine of salvation, that he is the propitiation for the sin of the world, and, as much as is in them, cause men not to become partakers of reconciliation. They teach contrary to Scripture, for Romans 4:5 says: "To him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness." They rob Christ of the honor of salvation, for according to 1 John 2:2, Christ and no other and nothing else is the propitiation for the sins of the whole world. And they do not allow people to be reconciled, because the Scripture says in Galatians 5:4: "You who would be justified by the law have lost Christ and have fallen from grace." Our confession also bears witness to this. Thus it says in the Apology (p. 144): "Faith reconciles and makes us righteous before God, when and at what time we receive the promise by faith." The Augsburg Confession (Art. XX) confesses according to Scripture "that our works cannot reconcile us to God and obtain grace, but this is done by faith alone, if we believe that our sins are forgiven for Christ's sake, who alone is the mediator to reconcile the Father, I Tim. 2:5. Whoever therefore supposes to accomplish this by works and to merit grace, despises Christ and seeks his own way to God against the gospel." (S. 44, 9. 10.)

This doctrine of faith, that faith is the only means by which we can be reconciled with God, is what the Augsburg Confession calls in the same passage "the chief part" of Christian doctrine. The papacy not only denies this main article, but curses it (Session VI of Council of Trent). But this article is nowadays also generally denied in Protestant Christendom, and the Romans rejoice in it. The recently published *Catholic Encyclopedia* [Cf. this blog post], on which Catholic theologians from all over the world have worked, rejoices that only the Missourians and the Saxon Free Church still hold to "the strict orthodoxy of the Old Lutherans".

(Joseph Pohle *Cath. Encycl.* VIII, 576.) Unfortunately, the Catholics are right, if one looks at the people who are nowadays mainly regarded as representatives of Protestantism. Even so-called positive theologians deny that faith alone is necessary to attain reconciliation with God. Kirn in Leipzig, Luthardt's successor, taught the so-called guarantee theory (Bürgschaftstheorie). 3) [3) *Ev. Dogmatik* 3, p. 118 Kirn's successor, Ihmels, also criticized Christ's satisfactio vicaria. *Zentralfragen* 3, pp. 104-130]. According to this, Christ's work of reconciliation is supposed to have the meaning that in it Christ gave his heavenly Father the guarantee that people would transform their lives and keep to the divine law. Only through the transformation of life would the reconciliation of man with God be complete.

But the Catholic Dr. Pohle is not right when he writes that only in the Missouri Synod and in the Saxon Free Church is justification taught and believed solely through faith in the reconciliation brought about by Christ. This is also still taught and believed outside the Missouri Synod and the Saxon Free Church. All Christians, even those in the heterodox fellowships, believe this doctrine of reconciliation through Christ. Whoever has this faith is a Christian, and vice versa: whoever does not have it is not a Christian. As Luther reminds us, there are also believing Christians in the papacy who outwardly participate in the Mass, but who do not place their trust in the Mass, but in Christ's merit alone. Thus there are still some among the sect preachers who preach Christ crucified, and among their listeners those who carry faith in Christ crucified in their hearts through the work of the Holy Spirit. From the war over there came news that of course many regimental pastors denied Christ, the Savior of sinners. But laymen, Christian soldiers and officers, preached reconciliation through the blood of Christ. The newspapers carried the following note: "A Dr. Asmussen from the König regiment in Flensburg was shot to death with many, many others during the storming of a steep French hilltop position. There he crawled from one dying man to another, himself bleeding from many wounds, with the New Testament in his hand, to remind them once again of the One who died for all." Thus God ensures that the word of the crucified Savior is proclaimed and believed even in such church camps where otherwise unbelief prevails.

How does a person come to believe in the gospel of reconciliation?

Faith in the reconciliation brought about by Christ is a plant that does not grow in the field of the natural human heart, but a plant that God plants with his grace and omnipotence.

"the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God", 1 Cor. 2:14. "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him", John 6:44. "We believe according to the working of his mighty power", Eph. 1:19. The matter stands thus: man can do much outwardly by nature, many great and difficult works, in the opinion that he is thereby reconciled to God. For in all men, as the Apology says, there is the opinio legis, that is, the opinion that they can and must reconcile God with their own works. This is why we find people naturally inclined to reconcile themselves with God through their own works. Man can scourge himself, starve, give away millions, jump into the fire, kill himself, sacrifice his children to Moloch — in the belief that he is reconciling God. But there is one thing that man cannot do by nature: he cannot believe in the reconciliation that has taken place through Christ. This is beyond his power; he has neither understanding nor desire for it (1 Cor. 2:14). Luther therefore says: "Faith is a work as great as when God creates heaven and earth again."

But how does a person come to believe in the gospel of Christ crucified? The gospel has a very strange characteristic. It creates its own recognition among people, that is, it itself produces the faith that it demands. "Faith cometh by hearing", Romans 10:17, referring to the preaching of the gospel. There is a great difference between the law and the gospel. The law is powerless to enforce itself on people; it mobilizes sin instead of killing it. If a pastor has preached only the law for fifty years, then in the fifty years he has not made a single soul fulfill half a commandment. Through the law does not come fulfillment of the law, but knowledge of the transgression of the law (Rom. 3:20). — But the gospel is different: it enforces itself and works the faith it demands. This is why we correctly distinguish between the giving and the working power of the gospel. The gospel offers us the grace that Christ has acquired, and at the same time it works faith in grace. It itself draws faith out of man. How does this happen? The Holy Scriptures give us more information about this. Wherever the Gospel is preached or read, the Holy Spirit is at work through the Gospel. This is, so to speak, the actual business of the Holy Spirit on earth until the Last Day. Christ says of the Holy Spirit in John 16:14: "He shall glorify me." This is what happened in Corinth when the apostle Paul preached Christ crucified there. He reports in 1 Cor 2:2, 4-5: "For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified. ... And my speech and my

preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God."

We must continue to preach two things: 1. the Law: all men are indebted to God; 2. the Gospel: all men are reconciled through Christ. The Holy Spirit ensures the success of the sermon. Moody is reported as saying: "Give the Gospel a chance. The Gospel takes care of itself." And faith in the gospel is there as soon as there is only a desire for this grace that the gospel promises for Christ's sake in a human heart that has been crushed by the law through the action of the Holy Spirit.

The task of the Christian church in this world.

The gospel of reconciliation through Christ is the message of the Christian Church to the world. The world still stands by this proclamation. The real message that the Christian church has to bring to the world is not the message that there is a God — the Gentiles know that too, Romans 1:19 —; nor the message that God created and rules the world — the Gentiles are not unaware of this either, Rom. 1:20 —; nor the message that God demands goodness and morality from people and punishes evil with death and damnation — the Gentiles know this too, Rom. 1:32; 2:14; nor the message that Christ is true God and man — the devils also know this, Matt. 8:29 — but the message of the gospel is about the result of Christ's work on earth, namely the reconciliation that Christ, true God and man, has brought about, the forgiveness of sins, the grace of God that is present through Christ. Yes, that is our message to the world. And the world is still waiting for this message to be proclaimed. World history revolves around the reconciliation of mankind with God through Christ. We divide the time of the world into the time before and after Christ. The four thousand years before Christ were given to the world because of the reconciliation that took place when the time was fulfilled. The years after Christ were given to the world because of the reconciliation that took place through Christ nineteen hundred years ago. God has established among men the word of the reconciliation that has taken place. This is to resound throughout the world through the church. The Savior says Matt. 24:14: "This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come." The world that still exists is only the scaffolding for the building of the Christian church. The fact that there are states, cities and countries is only for the purpose of preaching the gospel. Sun, moon and stars shine only for the sake of the gospel. Everything

that goes on in heaven and on earth does not go on for its own sake, but only for the sake of the Gospel. Everything, including war, must serve the preaching of the gospel, so that people come to the knowledge of sin and to faith. This is the clear teaching of Holy Scripture, and only if we have this worldview do we have the Christian worldview. That is why we should not feel so sorry for the low position we occupy in the world. The world sees us Christians as a minor matter, but basically we, who believe the gospel and have to proclaim it, are the center of the universe. Heaven and earth, air and wind — everything is governed in the interests of the church. For "all things must work together for the good of those who love God", Romans 8:28.

Let us therefore use the time that God has given to the world for the preaching of the Gospel and for faith in the Gospel! Let us all be diligent in our capacity as spiritual priests, according to 1 Peter 2:9: "You are the chosen generation" etc.! As spiritual priests, let us proclaim the reconciliation that has taken place through Christ to our children and household members, our neighbors and all those with whom God brings us together in civil life! Let us be diligent in the training of Christian teachers and preachers, so that through their witness in church and school the precious blood of Christ may bear fruit! Let us also be diligent in giving earthly goods for the preaching of the Gospel in the world! Cursed be all avarice that hinders us! But blessed be all diligence, temporal and eternal, with which we serve our Savior in his kingdom! O Lord, help us! send now prosperity! [Ps. 118:25] F. Pieper.

Doctrinal Proceedings.

(Speaker: Dr. F. Pieper.)

The "Lay Movement" Ordained by God. ^

I.

The "lay movement" in the proclamation of the Word.

While it must be acknowledged and maintained that the public ministry of preaching, which requires a special ability and a special calling, is not merely an ecclesiastical institution but a divine order, it must also be acknowledged and maintained that the preaching of the Word by all Christians is both a divine order and of the greatest importance for the Church. — The preaching of the Word by women where it is justified and its limitation.

II.

The "lay movement" in financial terms.

Although the Old Testament order of tithing may not be placed on the conscience of New Testament Christians, it is and remains the divine order that New Testament Christians should give themselves and all their earthly goods to Christ and willingly place as much of it at his disposal for his church as he needs at any time.

III.

The "lay movement" in the Christian walk in general.

Although Christians are above all to build Christ's kingdom through the Christian proclamation of the Word, it is nevertheless the divine order that all Christians should also work diligently for the Christian Church at all times through their Christian conduct in all circumstances of life.

There has been much talk of a so-called "lay movement" in the Protestant church fellowships of America in the last decade. This has especially been the case since 1906, when a kind of organization called the "*Laymen's Missionary Movement*" came into being. Not only ecclesiastical but also secular newspapers published long reports about it.

The purpose of the movement is to win the so-called laymen in all church communities to a more general and greater activity for the preaching of the Gospel throughout the world and, in particular, to encourage greater gifts for the expansion of the Christian Church. In the winter of 1909 and 1910, Laymen's Missionary Conventions were held in 75 cities in the United States. Many enthusiastic speeches were given and large sums of money were collected. A certain John Kennedy alone contributed 10 million dollars for Foreign and Home Missions.

What do we make of this movement? It has been discredited in our country, especially because many speakers have revealed through the content of their speeches that they do not know what Christianity actually is. [See Pieper's 1902 essay "The Nature of Christianity."] Christianity is often confused with civil culture and human progress. The task of the Christian church is seen not so much to save sinners by preaching the gospel of Christ but to educate the non-Christian world to become civilized people. However, this is quite wrong. We have always rightly spoken out against this purpose of Christianity. It is true that Christianity is the greatest and most secure cultural power in the world. Even non-believers have admitted this. It is reported of the English naturalist Darwin that, after a visit to Tierra del Fuego in South America

he declared this people incapable of civilization. Missionaries then came to the Fuegians with the gospel. When Darwin later visited them again and saw the change that had taken place with this people as a result of the mission, he is said to have made regular contributions to the mission. But let us be clear: the Christian Church has always regarded good morals and civil culture only as the fruit and consequence of Christianity, not as Christianity itself. The real task of the Church is to preach the Gospel. It is to save humanity not only from barbarism, but from eternal damnation.

But what is right about the so-called "lay movement"? It is the truth that not only pastors, but all Christians without exception and without ceasing should be active in preaching the Gospel near and far. This is divine order. There is a lay movement commanded by God, and in these days we want to visualize it according to its main features from God's Word. This should not really be necessary for Lutherans. We are completely familiar with the matter. Luther brought "the spiritual priesthood" of all Christians from God's Word back to light. But spiritual priesthood is just another word for the Christian lay movement. Spiritual priesthood denotes not only a dignity, but also an activity or movement, namely: teaching, sacrificing, confessing. As I said, we are familiar with this. From our youth we have heard about the spiritual priesthood of all Christians and have been taught the rights and duties of the spiritual priesthood. Nevertheless, because of the flesh that still clings to us, we are all in great need of continual instruction and encouragement from God's Word on this point. There is a lot going on among us in this area that goes against God's Word and will, or is actually omitted. Anyone who knows the situation must say that there is a tendency to leave the Christian proclamation of the Word entirely to the public preaching office and to be passive or almost passive with regard to this point. Likewise, there is always a recognizable tendency to be as passive as possible in giving for the kingdom of God instead of being active. Even in our Christian walk we do not promote the kingdom of God as we should. It is obvious that this means great harm both for the church and for the world. But we ourselves also suffer great harm if, contrary to God's will and order, we fail to engage in Christian movement and activity. Let us take the example of the natural life. If you want to stay physically healthy, it is not enough to eat well and abundantly. You must also get enough exercise, otherwise you will sit and lie stiff or even dead. Impure fluids form which endanger health and life. It is the same in the spiritual realm. It is not enough for

us Christians to eat well. We now have good food in our Church. We have the gospel pure and plentiful. But we must now also move all the more nimbly and abundantly by proclaiming the Word on our part and by offering our earthly goods for the Gospel and by walking most carefully before the world. Otherwise impure fluids will form. O how many a Christian has sat and lain to death spiritually! Therefore, Holy Scripture, from beginning to end, exhorts all Christians to the most zealous lay movement, as we will demonstrate in these days. First, let us consider the activity of the proclamation of the Word.

Thesis I. ^

The "lay movement" in the proclamation of the Word.

While it must be acknowledged and maintained that the public ministry of preaching, which requires a special ability and a special calling, is not merely an ecclesiastical institution but a divine order, it must also be acknowledged and maintained that the preaching of the Word by all Christians is both a divine order and of the greatest importance for the Church. — The proclamation of the Word by women where it is justified and its limitation.

The Christian Church directs everything it does on earth through the proclamation of the Word of God. All other things serve the purposes of the Christian Church only insofar as they serve the course of the Word of God. The life and activity of the Christian Church is so bound to God's Word that the Holy Scriptures, when describing the growth of the Church in the world, also say: "The Word of God grew and multiplied", Acts 12:24. The Christian Church teaches, she is a teacher of the world; but she does not teach her own word or the wisdom of men, but only the Word of God, 1 Peter 4:11: "If any man speak, let him speak as the Word of God." The Christian church resists, it resists all false teaching and all false teachers, but not with the sword and with external force, but only with God's Word. The weapons of the Christian church are not carnal, says the Apostle 2 Cor. 10:4. The Christian church gathers and unites, but not by mere external association and organization in the case of doctrinal disagreement, but by witnessing and confessing the Word of God and by faithfully holding fast to this Word in the face of all deviation from the truth. John 17:17: "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is trut." It leaves it to the Holy Spirit to create and maintain unity through the witnessed Word of God. That the Christian Church conducts its business in the world solely by testifying to the Word of God without all worldly power is the great

truth to which Luther, in contrast to the papacy and the enthusiasts, testified from Holy Scripture.

But who is to proclaim this Word of God? It is a clear teaching of Scripture that all Christians, as Christians, have the command to preach the gospel and administer the sacraments that belong to it. This is clearly taught Matt. 28:19-20; 1 Pet. 2:9; Matt. 16:19; 18:18-20. The more detailed explanation follows later. But do Christians also have a command from God to entrust special persons with the teaching ministry in addition to the teaching that belongs to all of them? If this is the case, what is the relationship between this public teaching ministry and the teaching of all Christians? These questions have been raised at all times in the Christian Church and have not always been answered in accordance with Holy Scripture. The errors that have arisen on this point can be divided into two classes. Some have spoken of the public preaching office in such a way that they have restricted the proclamation of the Word, which belongs to all Christians by virtue of their spiritual priesthood, contrary to Scripture. This is done by the Roman sect and also by Romanizing Protestants. They teach: Only "priests" or "pastors" can forgive sin; lay people are not to teach in church meetings, but only to listen and obey. Others, however, have spoken of the spiritual priesthood of Christians in such a way as to deny the divine order of the public preaching ministry. The Quakers did and do this in a very gross way. They reject the preaching of the Word by special persons appointed by the Christian congregation because they see it as a restriction of the freedom of the Holy Spirit. They want no other proclamation of the Word within Christianity than that which is practiced by all Christians when they are seized by the Holy Spirit. (Cf. Günther, Symbolik, p. 372) Hence their "silent assemblies". No one speaks until they have received the "inner light". If no one is driven to speak by "the inner voice", then they disperse again without having said a word. Luther and the Lutheran Church allow both proclamations of the Word as being ordered by God. To remind us in advance of one of Luther's words, Luther remarks on Col. 3:16: "What teaching and exhortation is, is now often said, without St. Paul here making the teaching office common to all Christians, when he says: Teach and exhort yourselves, that is, one to another, and every man to himself, besides the common office of preaching, that thus the word should go forth publicly and secretly, common and special, everywhere in the preaching." (St. L. XII, 394.)

At this synod assembly we want to deal especially with the Christian "lay movement" according to Holy Scripture. We therefore also want to speak in particular about the proclamation of the Word, which belongs to all Christians. We will demonstrate from Scripture

that the preaching of the Word by all Christians is not at the discretion of Christians, but is divine order. We will also recognize from Scripture that Christians without distinction are qualified to preach the Word. We will also remember what a tremendous power for the prosperity and expansion of the Church is contained in the preaching of the Word commanded to all Christians, and what harm comes to the Church from the omission of this activity. However, since the divine order of the preaching ministry has not always been discussed in the same way in the past and present , let us first outline the teaching of Holy Scripture on this point.

The divine order of the public office of preaching.

Let us first remember what we mean by the "public preaching ministry" alongside the spiritual priesthood and by "divine order". We do not call the preaching ministry "public" by location. By virtue of their spiritual priesthood, all Christians also have the right and duty to speak God's word in public places and in front of thousands of people, as the second part of the first thesis explains in more detail. We call the preaching ministry "public" rather from the fact that it is administered on behalf of Christians or — which is the same thing — on behalf of the congregation. It is in this sense that we have previously spoken of a "public preaching ministry". Cf. Walther in "Church and Ministry", Thesis VII on the ministry of preaching: "The holy preaching office is the authority conferred by God through the church as holder of the spiritual priesthood and all church authority to exercise the rights of the spiritual priesthood in public ministry on behalf of the congregation." — Furthermore, as far as the expression "divine order" is concerned, we do not merely understand this to mean that God has made Christians in such a way that they, on reasonable reflection and consideration of all circumstances — for example: the nature of the gospel or the needs of the church or the gifts of God to the church — come to the establishment of the public ministry of preaching, but this, that the establishment of this ministry is not left to the pleasure and good judgment of Christians, but is commanded them by God, so that Christians do not merely go against a good ecclesiastical order, but against a divine order, if they do not wish to establish the public ministry of preaching or if they abolish the one that has been established. In this sense we have so far called the public ministry of preaching divine order. Cf. Walther in "Church and Ministry", Thesis I, II and III on the ministry of preaching: "The sacred ministry of preaching or pastoral ministry is a different ministry from the priesthood, which all believers have." "The office of preaching or parish ministry is not a human order, but an office instituted by God himself."

"The ministry of preaching is not an arbitrary office, but such an office as the church is commanded to establish and to which the church is ordinarily bound until the end of time." To give an example: God has, however, made Christians in such a way that they pursue sanctification and good works of their own accord — according to the new nature planted in them by God. The saving grace of God that has come to them chastens them to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts and to live chastely, righteously and godly in this world, Titus 2:11 ff. At the same time we rightly say with our Confession "that it is God's will, order and command that believers should walk in good works". (Formula of Concord. SD IV, 7; *Triglotta*, p. 939) For thus the apostle Paul writes of sanctification and good works in 1 Thess. 4, 2. 3: "You know what commandments we have given you through the Lord Jesus, for this is the will of God, your sanctification." And to cite another species of good works : Christians are made by God in such a way that they recognize without much thought that "those who preach the gospel should feed on the gospel". Nevertheless, Scripture is very clear that this is done according to divine order and by divine command, 1 Corinthians 9:14: "The Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should feed on the gospel." Thus we also say of the public preaching ministry that it not only grows out of the nature of Christians, the content of the gospel, the needs of the church, the teaching gifts that Christ bestows on the church, etc., but is moreover God's order and foundation in the sense that it has God's express command and clear commandment.

This is the teaching of Holy Scripture. The apostle Paul commands the establishment of this office when he instructs Titus to appoint elders to the cities on the island of Crete. Tit. 1:5: "For this reason I left you in Crete, that you should complete the work I left you to do, and appoint elders to the cities back and forth, as I commanded you." The situation on the island of Crete was this: Christian congregations had been established on Crete. But the public preaching ministry had not yet been established in these churches. Why this had not been done is not specified. Whether it was because the Christians still lacked the knowledge to do so, thinking that the establishment of the preaching ministry was not necessary and was at their discretion, whether it was because they lacked the will, shying away from the costs, the financial part of establishing the public ministry, or whether it was because Titus himself hesitated unduly: in any case, the apostle Titus gives the order to establish the preaching ministry. We need only look at the words: "For this reason I left you in Crete, that you should ... ... to appoint elders to the cities back and forth, as I commanded you." Luther says about this passage: "Whoever believes that here the

Spirit of Christ speaks and orders in Paul, recognizes that this is a divine appointment and order, that in every city there are many bishops or at least one." (On the Abuse of the Mass 1522. St. L. XIX, 1093) It is clear that the words Tit. 1:5 do not merely express good advice, for example in the sense: "See whether the appointment of the public preaching office does not naturally develop in Crete from the Christian sense and the state of the churches, and act according to the circumstances", but the words are a command, and indeed a command which the apostle had already given beforehand, that is, before the actual establishment of the office, and which was to be the rule and guideline of action for Titus. The idea of establishing the preaching ministry did not just develop in the churches, but was already in the apostle of Christ before it was carried out. In short, the apostle here commands Titus to do for the churches in Crete what he himself had done in the churches of Asia Minor, according to the account in Acts 14:26: "They appointed elders for them in the churches." If Titus had not appointed elders to the cities on the island of Crete, he would not only have ignored good advice, but also a command from the apostle. Nor should the appointment of elders be done merely in this or that city, where it is deemed appropriate and useful, but city by city, that is, city by city, where there is a Christian congregation. In short, the establishment of the public preaching ministry is by divine command. And in this sense, the public preaching ministry is a divine order. In addition to the command to all Christians to preach the gospel, and in addition to the general command to have everything done properly in the church, God has also given the special command, valid for all time, to establish the public preaching ministry in the local church, namely the ministry by which this church in its entirety and in its individual members is officially supplied with God's Word. We mean this divine command, valid for all times until the Last Day, when we say that the ministry of preaching, which is a different ministry from the priesthood of all Christians, "is not an arbitrary ministry, but a ministry which the church is commanded to establish and to which the church is ordinarily bound until the end of days", apostles, prophets, miracle workers, tongues speakers, etc. belong to temporal relationships. That is why Paul does not command Titus to appoint apostles, prophets, miracle workers, tongues speakers, etc. to the churches on Crete. But he does order him to appoint "elders" to the cities back and forth. But that the elders to be appointed are an office distinct from the general priesthood or administrators of the public preaching office is evident from the fact that in the words immediately following the apostle exchanges the word "elders" for the word "bishops"

and — just like 1 Tim. 3 — adds a list of qualities that should be found in a bishop: "A bishop should be blameless as a steward of God, … able to exhort with sound doctrine and to reprove those who contradict." At the apostle's command ("as I have commanded you"), Titus is to inspect the cities back and forth with such people.

But even more! If Christians obey this command and appoint preachers from among themselves, then, according to the teaching of Scripture, God himself has placed these preachers in the congregation in question, and not only in the sense that they are God's gifts to the church — which they are according to Eph. 4:11 — nor merely in the sense that God has made them competent to lead the ministry of the New Testament — that is also true — but precisely also in the special sense that God Himself has placed them in the congregation in question, in the place in question, through the calling carried out by men, as can be seen from Acts 20:28. Here the apostle Paul addresses the indirectly called elders of Ephesus thus: "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, among the which the Holy Ghost hath appointed you bishops, to feed the church of God."

But also the lasting actual relationship that arises when a Christian congregation directs the public preaching ministry according to God's command and order, namely the relationship between preachers and listeners, teachers and taught, watchmen and watched, shepherd and flock, those who care for souls and those whose souls are cared for — this relationship is described in Scripture as ordered by God. Both preachers and listeners are commanded to recognize this relationship as one ordained by God and to behave accordingly. Just as it is not human or ecclesiastical, but divine order that every Christian teaches, reproves, admonishes, comforts, is the brother's keeper, etc., so it is also divine order that the elder or bishop in public office should publicly and especially provide, teach, reprove, admonish, comfort, oversee, feed, etc. the congregation, flock, etc. commanded to him with God's Word. This activity in relation to the congregation, flock, etc. under their charge is not at the discretion of the pastor, but is commanded to him by God. Acts 20:28 says in a commanding form: "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, among the which the Holy Ghost hath made you bishops, to feed the church of God." 1 Pet 5:2: "Feed the flock of Christ which is committed to you." 1 Tim. 3:5: "If anyone does not know how to rule his own house, how will he feed the church of God?" As "shepherds" of the flock commanded to them by the "arch-shepherd", they will have to give an account to him, 1 Pet. 5:4 — But Christians, the members of the church, should

also recognize the relationship between teachers and taught, between shepherd and flock, between pastors and those whose souls are cared for, as established and ordered by God. It is not left to their discretion whether they want to recognize this relationship or not, but they are commanded: "Obey your teachers and follow them, for they watch over your souls as those who are to give an account of them, so that they may do this with joy and not with groaning, for this is not good for you", Heb 13:17. Luther: "So it must be in the spiritual ministry — which is God's work and rule, and yet everyone wants to master and despise it as he pleases — that one confidently defies such insolent spirits in God's Word and order and says: Reproach and despise me, whoever will, for the sake of my person, but for the sake of my ministry you shall honor and exalt me, as dear as Christ and your salvation and blessedness are to you; for you are not my pastor or preacher, but God has appointed me so that you must receive the gospel from me and come to God's kingdom through my ministry." (St. L. VIII, 1128) In short, God wants the relationship of shepherd and flock in his church here on earth. Thus the ministry of preaching is divine order in its beginning, means and end, or in its idea, execution and continuance.

From what has been said so far, it is already clear that Scripture does not leave us in the dark about the functions or activities of the public preaching ministry. We know the exact nature and extent of these functions from God's Word. We do not know as precisely from Scripture the functions of the diaconate and other offices mentioned in Scripture (1 Tim. 3:8 ff.; Rom. 12:7-8). This corresponds to the practice in our Synod that, for example, the church leaders, church elders etc. have different activities in different places. But we know exactly what the functions of the public preaching office, the pastoral or parish office, are. Scriptural statements that completely cover the whole and the individual are found in the Scripture passages already cited. As far as the type of activity is concerned, those in public ministry are to teach, reprove, admonish, comfort, shepherd, watch over souls, pray for them, be examples in their conduct, etc. As far as the scope of their work is concerned, they are not merely to feed a few souls, but the church of God with God's Word, 1 Tim. 3:5; to feed the flock of Christ which is commanded them, 1 Pet. 5:2; to watch over the whole flock, among which the Holy Spirit has placed them as bishops, to feed the church of God, Acts. 20:28, to all ranks and ages, 1 Tim. 5:1 ff.; Tit. 2:1 ff. Luther therefore calls the office of bishop or preacher the office of ruling Christendom in all classes with the Word of God. Those in this office are also officially obliged to be examples in their walk, not just of some, but of the flock,

1 Peter 5:3: "Not as ruling over the people, but being examples to the flock." The practice in our Synod also corresponds to this. Because we know from God's Word exactly what a pastor has to do according to divine order, we have a very specific goal in our theological institutions that the teachers must strive for and the students must achieve before we recommend them for appointment to the preaching ministry: candidates for the preaching office must not merely be able to teach as Christian brethren teach one another, but they must have attained such a degree of teaching ability that they can preside over a congregation of God with God's Word, supply a congregation of God with God's Word both in public preaching and in private pastoral care. Throughout Scripture we find instructions on how to administer the public teaching ministry. But in three letters of the apostle Paul, the Holy Spirit gives Christians special instruction on both the nature of the persons who are to be placed in the public ministry and the functions in which this ministry is to be exercised. For this reason, these letters have always been called pastoral letters in the Church, i.e. letters about the direction of the pastoral office. Luther rightly writes in his preface to the first letter to Timothy: "St. Paul writes this epistle as a model for all bishops, what they should teach and how they should govern Christianity in all states, so that there is no need to govern Christians out of their own human conceit." (St. L. XIV, 120)

At various times the question has been discussed in detail in the church as to whether a Christian congregation may not also place such persons in the ministry who, although they cannot teach and govern the whole congregation in all ranks with God's Word, nevertheless have excellent gifts to serve in the congregation as exhorters or as rulers and overseers or as teachers or as practitioners of mercy, and so on. Certainly the church can and should do this, because all the gifts that God distributes to his Christians are intended for the common good. Read Romans 12 and 1 Corinthians 12 in particular. But these services are neither individually nor collectively the office of bishop or the public preaching office, which is to watch over the whole church and to provide and govern the whole church in all ranks and ages with God's word. The apostle Paul therefore also expressly distinguishes the office of bishop and the bishops from the ministers in 1 Tim. 3. Compare 1 Tim. 3:1-7 with 1 Tim. 3:8-13. And the persons who serve the church within the church as exhorters, rulers, overseers, teachers, etc., either without or with an express commission from the church, remain under the oversight of the office of bishop or public preaching office, even though this office includes oversight of the

whole flock and responsibility for the whole flock.

In this scope of ministry and the qualities required of "bishops" or "elders", which Scripture describes especially in 1 Tim. 3:1-7, Tit. 1:5-9, 1 Pet. 5:1-4 and Acts 20:28 neither the church nor the pastor can change anything. We are dealing here with a divine order and divine ordinances. For example, a church cannot entrust one person with the public teaching ministry and another person with the Christian walk that is exemplary for the whole flock and with procuring the good reputation that pastors should also have with the world. Both qualities must be united in the one person of the bishop or pastor. Scripture expressly says of the bishop or pastor: "But he must also have a good report of those who are without", 1 Tim. 3:7. A church may not deviate from this rule. It may not call a man to the preaching office or leave him in this office if he has committed civil offenses and thereby lost his good name before the world. If he repents sincerely, he can be a member of the church and be saved, no matter how deeply he has fallen. But he may not remain in the public preaching ministry. That is the divine order. The church must take the office from him. If a congregation would not submit to the divine order even after proper instruction and admonition, we would have to exclude it from our church fellowship. But also with regard to the other qualities that should be found in bishops or pastors, we must not make a distinction that conflicts with God's order. A congregation must not say: We want to have or keep a pastor who means well, is pious and kind at heart, even if he is not doctrinally competent in the sense that he can care for the whole flock in public preaching and private pastoral care. Of course, there are different degrees of teaching and ministry in general. God has also distributed the gifts necessary for the administration of the public preaching ministry in varying degrees. But even the least gifted and trained should possess the degree of ability to lead the whole congregation and every member of it, man and woman, young and old, rich and poor, healthy and sick and afflicted, etc., along the right, straight path to salvation. Nor may a congregation say: We are satisfied with the fact that our pastor presents the right doctrine, even if he cannot or will not refute the wrong doctrine. In the divine instruction for the bishop or elder it says not only that he must hold fast to the word which is sure and able to teach, but also that he must be able to rebuke the opposers and shut them up, Titus 1:9-11; he must not only feed the whole flock, but also be able to ward off the

grievous wolves who do not spare the flock, Acts 20:28-29. Finally, a congregation must not say: We are already satisfied if our pastor can only read a sermon by other good preachers or memorize and recite a sermon by Luther, Gerhard or Walther. Walther rightly says in his *Pastorale* (p. 96) that this is not enough, and he adds: "For this very reason God has instituted a personal public preaching office, so that the Word of God may be applied according to the various conditions of men." The sermon must be both "contemporary" and appropriate to the congregation. "He, therefore, who would always preach the same sermons that an excellent servant of God of old preached for the unspeakable blessing of his time, would not do what his office requires of him in his time." (ibid., p. 106)

But what about a congregation that has not yet been able to obtain a person who possesses the qualities necessary for the office of bishop, or that is temporarily "vacant"? Well, this is a Christian congregation. The establishment of the office of pastor is not part of the nature of the congregation. Such a congregation will also not let God's Word rest completely in public. It will appoint one or more people to read out a sermon, visit the sick, perform baptism and serve communion. (Cf. Walther, *Pastorale*, p. 180 f. [*Pastoral Theology*, p. 211-212]) But the church has not yet organized the public preaching ministry ordered by God.

But these are all things that are well known and generally practiced among us. In all the theological seminaries that exist among us, we train people who possess the requirements and qualities that bishops or elders should have according to 1 Tim. 3, Tit. 1, 1 Pet. 5 and Acts 20. And we do not follow this practice in order to do justice to temporal conditions, but because we recognize the establishment of the personal public office of bishop or preacher as a divine foundation, valid and binding for all times. As Luther reminds us, there may be one or more bishops in a congregation, and they will carry out a certain division of labor among themselves. But each one must possess all the qualifications described in 1 Timothy 3 etc. if he is to be called a bishop or pastor without restriction.

Unity and differences of the spiritual priesthood and of the public preaching office.

In order that the functions of the spiritual priesthood and the functions of the public preaching office may not be improperly separated or mixed, it is useful to bear in mind both the unity and the differences of the two according to Scripture.

The unity consists in the following main points:

1. Both proclamations of the Word are acquired through Christ's blood, "dearly erarnet" (acquired), as Luther says (St. L. X. 424); they presuppose the reconciliation of the whole world through Christ and the message of this reconciliation, the Gospel.

2. Both proclamations of the Word presuppose faith in Christ, the new birth, the spiritual priesthood on the part of the preachers. There is no "theology of the unconverted" (*theologia irregenitorum*) neither among "laymen" nor among preachers, as some later theologians of our Church have erred. Both must have experienced sin and grace in their own hearts. It is not as if the word preached by an unbeliever is not powerful and cannot save souls, but rather that the unbeliever lacks the personal skill to proclaim the word.

3. Both proclamations of the Word are bound to God's Word and may not go beyond God's Word, 1 Pet. 4:11. the "layman" on the one hand may not refer to his "spirit", 1 Cor. 14:37: "If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge [recognize] what I write unto you: for they are the commandments of the Lord." Pastors, on the other hand, cannot refer to their "office" or their higher education, "science" and the like without and against God's Word.

4. Both proclamations of the Word have the same divine power. Whether God's Word is proclaimed by simple Christians or by highly educated pastors, it is always, according to Romans 1:16, the power of God to save, and according to John 6:63, the Spirit and life. Even the number of preachers does not take away or add anything to the power of the Word of God. The proclaimed Word of God always has the same divine power, regardless of whether it comes from an individual Christian or from a congregation or synod.

5. Both proclamations of the Word have the same binding force for the hearers. Heb 13:17: "Obey your teachers" etc. Matt. 18:17: "Do not listen to the church" etc.

6. Both proclamations of the Word have the same goal: the salvation of the hearers. With regard to the proclamation of the Word through the public ministry, 1 Timothy 4:16 applies: "Where you do these things, you will save yourself and those who hear you." With regard to the proclamation of the word by all Christians, John 7:38:39 applies: "He who believes in me, from his body will flow rivers of living water."

The differences lie in the following main points:

1. The public preaching ministry requires a special, that is, greater teaching ability, a greater gift and equipment. Hence the apostle Paul's warning to Timothy regarding the occupation of the ministry, 1 Tim. 5:22: "Lay hands on no one quickly." Also 2 Timothy 2:2: "And what you

have heard from me through many witnesses, command faithful men who are able to teach others also." Also Tit. 1; 1 Tim. 3.

2. A special call belongs to the public ministry of preaching. Not all Christians, insofar as they are Christians, are called to this ministry, but they require a special call from other Christians. James 3:1: "Brethren, do not submit to everyone to be a teacher." Heb. 5:4: "No one takes the honor from himself, but he who is also called by God, just as Aaron was." Every Christian is appointed to be a teacher of the brethren and of the world — this is to be noted — but to be a bishop, a teacher of a church of God as such, someone must first be specially appointed by the Holy Spirit. Acts 20:28; Tit. 1:5. For the proclamation of the Word, which is done through the public ministry, Christians as Christians are not the subject but the object, that is, they do not proclaim the Word in the public ministry, but the Word is proclaimed to them for their own good. Of course, the appointment to the preaching ministry is also for the sake of order. That is true. But order need not be set in opposition to divine order.

3. The sphere and nature of the activity of the public preaching ministry is different from the sphere and nature of the activity of every Christian. The Christian should also teach in the assemblies of Christians, in church assemblies, in synodical assemblies, etc.. But the individual Christian is not commanded to feed the whole church as a flock, but the preacher is, Acts 20:28; 1 Pet. 5:2; 1 Tim. 3:5, etc.

4. While Christians are to remain in their civil profession in the teaching commanded to them, the public ministers of the Word are not to involve themselves in the affairs of this life, 2 Tim. 2:4: "No man that warreth entangleth himself with the the affairs of this life", but according to Christ's command they are to feed on the gospel, 1 Cor. 9:14: "The Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should live of the gospel."

Unity and differences of the two proclamations of the Word according to Luther (on Ps. 110:4): "So it is now also in Christendom. Every man must first be a Christian and a born priest before he becomes a preacher or a bishop, and neither the pope nor any man can make him a priest. But if he is born a priest by baptism, the ministry comes afterward and makes a distinction between him and other Christians. For some must be taken from the whole body of Christians to preside over others, to whom God gives special gifts and abilities to make them fit for the ministry. As St. Paul says in Eph. 4:11-12: He has given some as apostles, some as prophets, some as evangelists, some as pastors and teachers, that the saints (that is, those who are already Christians and

baptized priests) may be sent to the work of ministry or service, by which the body of Christ (that is, the Christian congregation or church) may be edified. For although we are all priests, we cannot and should not all preach or teach and rule; but some must be separated and chosen from the whole group, to whom such a ministry will be entrusted. And whoever holds this office is not a priest for the sake of his office (as all the others are), but a servant of all the others. And when he is no longer able or willing to preach or minister, he rejoins the common body, entrusts the office to another, and is nothing more than any common Christian. See, thus the office of preaching or ministry must be separated from the common priesthood of all baptized Christians. For such an office is no more than a public ministry, if one is commanded by the whole congregation, who are all priests at the same time." (St. L. V, 1037.) Furthermore: "We all have this authority, but no one should presume to exercise it publicly except one who has been appointed to it by the congregation; privately, however, I may well use it." (Erl. 11, 319.) "All Christians serve God, but they are not all in office." (Revelation 7:79) "Everything is by the order and command of God, who has commanded me both to hear His Word and to preach it to you, and in one faith and spirit, and all praise one Lord at the same time." (Erl. 9, 221.) "All Christians are priests, but not all pastors. For in addition to being a Christian or a priest, he must also have an office and a command. It is the call and divine command make pastors and preachers." (St. L. V, 722) "Many, if they can tell a little of the Gospel, think they must soon appear and preach it to others." (St. L. XI, 1911.)

The importance of recognizing the divine order of the preaching office for pastor and congregation.

The realization that a preacher stands in office and performs his ministry according to divine ordnance and by divine command in a particular congregation is of utmost importance both for the preacher and for the congregation.

First of all for the preacher himself. If the preacher is certain that it is not merely human good will and judgment that has called his ministry into being and given him his commission, but that God himself has created his ministry and placed him in it, then this determines his attitude and his activity in carrying out his ministry with regard to a number of points.

1. Every Christian can and should plead with God, recognizing his own unfitness, that he would make him competent for his civil and spiritual calling. Especially the faithful pastor, however, is repeatedly moved by the thought that he is completely unfit for his ministry. But if

the pastor holds fast in faith that the office in which he stands does not merely develop from the circumstances of the church, but that God himself has ordered this office and placed him in it, he will plead with all the greater confidence to the Founder and Occupant of this office for the bestowal and preservation of the necessary ability. Accordingly Chemnitz has said: "It is not to be thought that this" (namely the calling of pastors) "happens from a human institution or only for the sake of order", he gives four reasons why a pastor is so necessary to recognize his divine calling. The second reason is: "Very many spiritual gifts, but especially divine guidance and protection, are necessary for the right administration of the ministry and for the edification of the church. Whoever therefore has a right calling can call upon God with a quiet conscience and expect certain fulfillment according to these promises, 2 Cor. 3" etc. (*Loci; 1. de eccles*., p. 130 f.)

2. Every Christian should know that he is a sheep of Christ's flock and a resident in God's house, in God's care and protection. The pastor, who holds the office ordained by God and, in each individual case, appointed by God, can and should know that he is doubly protected: first as a little sheep of the flock of Christ and as a member of his household, then also as the shepherd of the flock commanded to him and as "God's steward", Tit. 1:7. This gives him courage and strength to remain faithfully at his post, for example in the case of contagious diseases, when everyone flees. In faith in his divine calling, he knows that he is just as safe in the air of plague as he is in the healthiest region.

3. One challenge of the pastor is: "I labor in vain in my office." If he keeps in mind that he is in office not merely according to good human judgment, but according to God's order and command, he will be all the more likely to commending the success of his ministry to God, who will give fruit and victory in his time.

4. The pastor is tempted by his flesh to mix human thoughts into his preaching, to add to God's Word in doctrine and practice, or even to detract from it, in the opinion that this will benefit the church. If he keeps in mind that this office is God's, God's by origin and commission, he will recognize all the more clearly the folly of bringing anything other than God's Word to bear in his office.

5 As Dr. Walther used to remind us, the ministry of preaching has many temptations to laziness. If one is equipped with some gift of oratory, he can preach sermons that satisfy the majority of the congregation, at least at first, even though the sermons are not diligently and prayerfully studied and God's Word is not applied to the needs of the congregation as God intended through the endowment of a personal preaching office. Now, let the preacher remember: "The office in which I stand is God's,

endowed by God for the special purpose of supplying God's Word to young and old, male and female, rich and poor, the afflicted and the secure; I must take care of the whole flock, over which the Holy Spirit has made me shepherd, bishop and watchman, and I must give an account to the arch-shepherd of the souls committed to me" — if the preacher remembers these divine truths, sleepiness and sluggishness disappear before him like the mist before the sun.

6. All Christians should be careful in their walk. After all, they should show Christ and his Church to advantage through their conduct. If Christians walk offensively, Christ and his holy Christian church will be blasphemed by unbelievers. Therefore, all Christians are admonished not to participate in the disorderly nature of the world. A preacher is now in particular danger with regard to his walk, because his ministry brings him together with all kinds of interpretations and confronts him with tempting opportunities. And how the world rejoices when a pastor falls! The Telegraph reports this from New York to San Francisco. What earnestness in regard to his walk should therefore be found in a preacher! This earnestness will be increased by his remembering that his office is God's and that he is God's servant, messenger, in a special sense, and as such has to represent his God and Savior before the church and the world.

The realization that a preacher stands in office according to divine order and by divine command and performs his ministry is also of the utmost importance for the congregation.

1. In the knowledge that "God Himself instituted the office of preacher and filled it Himself", the congregation believes that their pastor is the best pastor in the world, even if he has fewer gifts than the pastor in the neighboring congregation. Dr. Walther says with regard to this point: "Of what importance it is to the hearers that they are certain of the divine appointment of their preacher to their pastorate, is not to be overstated here. If the hearers are convinced of this, they will be heartily satisfied even with a preacher of lesser gifts, if only he is faithful, and will not leave their church and run after the highly gifted, but will simply hold to this: our preacher is the one God has given us, through whom God wants to lead us to heaven and will therefore leave us under his pasture lacking nothing that we need for our salvation." (*Pastorale*, p. 29 f.)

2. The realization of the divine origin and occupation of the preaching ministry causes Christians to come to church diligently and regularly and also to listen willingly to the Word spoken in private pastoral care. The Christian says to himself: I want to hear the Word that God is saying to me today or on this particular occasion through the preacher

whom He has placed in His office and here. This realization also causes him to relate the word spoken by the pastor to his person. He regards both the punishing word of the law and the comforting word of the gospel as if God himself had spoken it to him.

3. If the public ministry of preaching is God's order for the good of the Church, then all Christians must also always be concerned about the appointment and maintenance of this ministry. How? Above all by establishing and maintaining Christian schools. We then send the best students from our parish schools to our higher educational institutions. These higher educational institutions, the colleges and seminaries, we care for and nurture with great diligence. We do not let interest in them grow cold. It is not doing too much for the cause if, in every congregational meeting, reports are given on our educational institutions as well as on other church work outside the congregation. This will result in both diligent prayers and willing gifts for our teaching institutions. We will also always be mindful of the supply of teaching institutions and not consider our own sons too good for the preaching or teaching ministry. Luther: "Therefore, if God has given (his word), we should also be thankful and courageous, read, hear, meditate, sing and say it day and night, and make sure that we have plenty of teachers who will hold it up to us abundantly and without ceasing. This is what it means to let God's Word dwell abundantly among us." (St. L. XII, 392.)

The papists speak of the Pope as the "Holy Father", even though he profanes the Gospel. Even the non-Romans call the Pope "Holy Father". On the other hand, the faithful preachers of the Gospel are despised by the world, and Christians often share in this contempt. They also speak of the "poor preacher" and do not want their sons to become preachers. Luther, on the other hand, says that those who stand in God's office and faithfully preach God's Word should not only be called "worthy lord", but also "holy lord" and "holy father", not because of their person, but because of the office in which they preach God's Word. He offers to call the Pope "Most Holy" three times, if the Pope only wanted to teach God's Word. (St. L. XVII, 2023 [Mueller has it VII, 600])

"All upright, pious souls should hold their pastors and preachers in all honor for the sake of the Lord Christ and his Word, and esteem them highly as a precious gift and jewel given by God, above all temporal treasures and gifts." (St. L. VII, 600.)

The preaching of the Word by all Christians is divine order.

A question that is often discussed in our time is: How can we reach the unchurched masses? It is God's will that the masses be reached. That is why God has arranged it in such a way that Christians do not sit in a corner or settle in

one state alone, but are scattered all over the world. According to Christ's order, Christians are to be "the light of the world", Matthew 5:14; Christians are not to run away from the world, but live in the world and serve the world as a spiritual light. The Christian Church is to be the city on a high mountain, Matt. 5:14, not a city down in a valley or in a bush or hidden behind rocky clefts, in short, not something of whose existence the world is unaware, but the city on a high mountain, so that when someone lifts up his eyes, he has the Christian Church before his eyes. Already in the prophecy of Isaiah 40:9, God calls upon his Church: "Zion, O preacher, ascend a high mountain! Jerusalem, O preacher, lift up your voice with power!" But to go up on a high mountain and lift up your voice with power means to preach so that the whole land can hear the voice of Zion. Thus the Holy Scriptures show us in many ways that the Christian Church is to reach "the masses". We are to be completely separated from the world in one respect, namely in our walk. We are not to walk like the children of this world. In another respect, we are to remain closely connected to the world and penetrate the world, namely through the proclamation of the Gospel. Our Christian vocation is in the midst of the world, in the masses and in all social classes.

But how do we reach the masses? Through pastors and itinerant preachers and missionaries, through people who preach the word on behalf of other Christians? Yes! That is one way in which the Lord Christ wants to reach the masses whom He has redeemed: to visit strangers on behalf of a congregation or even several congregations, to invite them to church and welcome them into the church, etc. The congregations should also create enough space in the church, build the church larger for the strangers if necessary, and advertise the services in the newspapers, etc. The pastor should also be given the necessary time to visit the unchurched in their homes. It is part of the Christian's calling to send specially equipped people to preach the Gospel to the Gentiles. Here we have the example of Acts 13:2: "Send me Barnabam and Saul for the work to which I have called them." In the same way, the churches should not tire of sending out traveling preachers in their own country and employing special traveling missionaries.

But we must not hide one truth. The main means of reaching the masses is a completely different one. It is the preaching of the Word, which should be done by all Christians. Pastors have always been too few to reach the masses. This is also the case in our time. But the masses are reached through the proclamation of the Word by all Christians. In their civil profession they are in closest and constant

contact with the masses of the people. In St. Louis, for example, we have about 30 pastors. But what are these among so many, namely, among the churchless of a city of 800,000 inhabitants? In contrast, there are 5000 of our Christians in the city who come into contact with the world every day in their profession. It is God's will and order that these Christians, wherever they go and stand, should be the spiritual light for their surroundings and speak God's Word in a very simple way, without coming out as professional preachers. While they go about their civil business with all diligence and faithfulness, they always have the opportunity to testify both the law and the gospel to their coworkers and associates. This actually happens among us. But it is also omitted in very many cases.

Christians have a call for this way of preaching the Word. Here in the United States, too, the false teaching has arisen, and our fathers had to combat the idea that spiritual priests only had to deal with God, not with their neighbor. Christians could deal with God, pray to God, but speaking the word to their neighbor was not their calling. According to Scripture, the spiritual priesthood also has to do with proclaiming the word to one's neighbor. According to 1 Peter 2:9, Christians are to proclaim the gospel as spiritual priests. There is probably no other place in Holy Scripture where Christians are given so many honorific titles as in this passage: "chosen generation, royal priesthood, holy nation, a peculiar people". But the titles of honor are immediately followed by the duty of all Christians: "to proclaim the virtues of Him who called you from darkness to his marvelous light". Isaiah 40:9 also belongs here: "Zion, O preacher, ascend a high mountain! Jerusalem, O preacher, lift up your voice with power!" "Zion" and "Jerusalem" are designations not only of the preachers, but of the entire Christian Church. A very strange event is reported in Numbers 11:26: Eldad and Medad prophesied in the camp of the children of Israel. To prophesy means to proclaim the Word of God through the Holy Spirit. Joshua was horrified and spoke to Moses (v. 28): "My lord Moses, forbid them!" But Moses said (v. 29): "Would God that all the Lord's people were prophets, and that the Lord would put his spirit upon them!" This wish is fulfilled in the New Testament, as Acts 2:17 (Pentecost): "In the last days" (that is, in the New Testament) "I will pour out of my Spirit on all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy." What was the privilege of individuals in the Old Testament has now become the duty of all Christians in the New Testament. Thus, all Christians without exception are called to proclaim the Word. Luther: "Every Christian is a king for himself and a priest for others. The priesthood is higher than the kingdom, for it

extends further" (that is, it has a wider sphere of activity). "For the priest ministers the word not for himself alone, but for others; but the faith, by which he first becomes king, he has for himself alone." (St. L. III, 1017.)

But what about the ability of Christians to proclaim the Word? The ability in this direction is completely underestimated by Christians — I would almost like to say — in 5 out of 100 cases. Our Christians very often truly do not know how much they know and consider themselves to be more ignorant than they are. That is why God's Word is there and teaches them about themselves, how much they actually know. Let us remember what Paul calls out not only to pastors, but to all Christians in Romans 15:14: "filled with all knowledge, that you may be able to reprove one another", and 1 Corinthians 1:4 ff: God has made you "rich in all things, in all doctrine and in all knowledge." It is true that we always have to deal with the fact that church members think that they are not able to testify of God's Word to the world around them. We must confront this error. When God himself testifies to his Christians in Scripture that they are rich in all teaching and knowledge, then it is true. God knows Christians much better than they know themselves. But it is often quite difficult to convince Christians of their rich knowledge and their ability to teach. It is not a question of preaching sermons. But all Christians can and should testify to everyone that all people are sinners and are completely reconciled with God through Christ. If we look at the history of the Church, we must say that Christianity has been spread precisely through lay preaching. Admittedly, there are individual cases of overestimation of ability among Christians. People resort to public preaching without being qualified to do so. But much, much more often we find cases in which people fail to proclaim the word for which they are qualified and called. This happens to the great detriment of the Church and the Christians themselves. The Scriptures testify to this qualification in the Old and New Testaments. Acts 2:17: "Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy." John 7:38: "He who believes in me, as the Scripture has said, out of his belly will flow rivers of living water."

Through a brief examination of Christians, we can easily convince them how rich in doctrine and knowledge they are made by God. For example, if we remind a Christian that the so-called worldly wise (philosophers) still disagree about the origin of the world, and we then put the question to the Christian: "Do you perhaps know where this world, heaven and earth, and what is in it, comes from?" the Christian will immediately answer: "Of course I know that. How could I not know that? I

believe in God the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth. I believe that God created me together with all creatures" etc. Then perhaps you also know who the one true God is? The Christian will answer: "Of course, I know that too. I know the three articles of the Christian faith! I believe in God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. I learned that from a young age, and we sing it every Sunday in the "Creed"." People are still arguing about who Jesus Christ is. Do you perhaps know? Do you know who Jesus Christ is? The Christian will answer: "Of course I know that very well. I believe that Jesus Christ is truly God, born of the Father in eternity, and also truly man, born of the Virgin Mary." Then do you know what Jesus Christ has done for you? The Christian may be somewhat reluctant to answer this question and reply: "What are you asking? Jesus Christ is my Lord, who has redeemed me, a lost and damned man, purchased and won me from all sin, from death and from the power of the devil, not with gold or silver, but with his holy, precious blood and with his innocent suffering and death." But what about faith in Christ? Do you also know how you can come to faith in Christ and remain in faith? "Certainly, I believe that I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ my Lord or come to him, but the Holy Spirit has called me through the gospel, enlightened me with his gifts, sanctified and preserved me in the right faith." But if you now have to confess that you still sin much every day and certainly deserve punishment — how will you get out of this embarrassment? "Thank God, I know that too! I remember the passage: Come to me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." In Christianity, God forgives me and all believers daily and abundantly for all sins." If you lack anything in spiritual and physical things, do you know where you can turn and fill your lack? "What a question! Even my mother taught me to pray. The Savior says: 'Ask and it will be given to you'." I can see you know quite a lot. Do you also know what will happen at the end of the world? "Of course I know that. Every Christian child knows that. I know that on the Last Day Christ will raise me and all the dead and give me and all believers in Christ eternal life; that is certainly true." That is enough. No offense intended! I know that you know even more things. You also know about Baptism and the Lord's Supper and many other things. Now thank God for the richness of your knowledge and share the treasure of your knowledge so that others may also benefit from it and rivers of living water may flow from your body.

The area of the preaching of the Word, which is to be done by all Christians.

1. All Christians should preach the Word in their own homes. There should be no house in which a daily service is not held in one form or another. Home worship is not yet found in all Christian homes. And it is a shame if all kinds of things are read in a Christian home, but not God's Word. In many cases the reason for this is that people believe that they cannot hold a home service, that they are not qualified to do so. But that is only imagination. Our Christians can all at least read, and that is all that is necessary at first. Reading God's word , reciting and listening to biblical history and catechism, that is already a home service. And how knowledge would grow in this daily interaction with God's Word! We learn by teaching. In many cases it is only necessary to make a start, Dr. Walther therefore advised that the pastor should give the congregation public and special instructions for holding a home service.

But what about the time to hold a home service? Every Christian has the time. Every Christian, whether he is a big or a small businessman, knows that he is speaking an untruth when he says that he has no time to read a chapter from the Bible or a short meditation and prayer from a devotional book every day in the presence of his family. The devil tries to prevent the general introduction of home devotions because he knows well what harm it would do him. I would especially like to encourage the brothers among the delegates: see to it that in the parishes you represent, home worship is introduced in all homes where it is not yet. Discuss the matter in the congregational meeting, for example. The Christian is first and foremost a priest in his home and has the duty to speak God's Word to children and servants. Certainly, it is the parents' duty to provide for their children physically. That is what parents are there for. But they are also parents primarily for the purpose of providing for their children spiritually day by day, and the father should know that he is leaving the main part of fatherhood undone if he is not obedient to the word: "Train up your children in the discipline and admonition of the Lord." Eph. 6:4. This is the point that Luther constantly emphasizes: "If Christianity is to come into power, it must truly raise up children, and then it will be a fine thing. I would suffer it well to begin in the cradle." (St. L. X, 636.) "It is the duty of every householder to raise his children and servants and to teach them or have them taught. For he is in his house as a pastor or bishop over his servants, and is commanded to see what they learn, and to answer for them." (St. L. VII, 353.) "No one should become a father unless he has learned to preach the commandments of God and the gospel to his children, so that he may raise up devout Christians." (St. L. X, 636.)

In former times in some places no one was married until he had passed an examination in catechism with the pastor. Luther gets a little rough at one point. He complains: "Parents think only of adorning their children and making sure that they are seen by the world; they make them rich, hang gold on the scumbag's neck and he can hardly walk. … It is highly necessary for every married man to regard his child's soul more, more deeply, more diligently than the flesh that has come from him, and not to regard his child otherwise than as a precious, eternal treasure, which God has commanded him to keep, lest the devil, the world, and the flesh steal it away and kill it." (St. L. X, 636. 643.)

2. Another area of preaching by all Christians is preaching among the brethren. When Christians come together, they should teach and exhort one another. Just as Christians are made by God so that, filled with all knowledge, they can exhort one another, Rom. 15:14, so it is also God's order and command that they make use of their ability in the company of the brethren. Col. 3:16: "Let the word of Christ dwell among you richly in all wisdom. Teach and admonish yourselves," etc. According to divine order, each Christian is the teacher and guardian of the other. No one may say: "Shall I be my brother's keeper?" Our Lutheran confession also includes mutuum colloquium et consolationem fratrum, that is, the mutual conversation and consolation of Christians with one another, among the various ways in which the gospel is to be practiced among Christians. (Smalcald Articles, Art. IV; *Triglotta*, p. 491.) This also includes the preaching of the word in church meetings. When a Christian in the church meeting, by the remembrance of the Holy Spirit, quotes a word of Scripture that belongs to the matter at hand, this also belongs to "prophesying", which is a gift of the Christians of the New Testament. Likewise, it is perfectly in accordance with divine order if — as is our custom, thank God — lay deputies also teach and exhort at our synodical meetings, both in doctrinal discussions and in business matters.

3. But a Christian can and should also speak in front of a large audience and in front of thousands. This can and should be done wherever it is not a matter of proclaiming the word to Christians and among Christians, which is only entrusted to a few specific persons. It would be quite wrong to say that only pastors are allowed to speak God's Word to large gatherings of people. No, if, for example, a Christian is in a mixed assembly of thousands and a testimony of Christ is needed, for example because Christ's church and his word have been attacked, then the Christian has a calling and a duty to testify before thousands as to what the divine truth is. Our Christians should not underestimate their abilities in this

respect either. If they can speak about political matters in public places before thousands, they can also confess Christ before thousands. Luther writes: "This is the call of a public office among Christians" (for which a special call by other Christians is necessary). "But if one were to come among the multitude where there were no Christians, one would want to do as the apostles did and not wait for a call. For there" (in the unbelieving crowd) "one does not have the office of preaching, and one would say: 'There are no Christians here, I will preach and teach them about Christianity,' and a group would gather, elect and appoint me as their bishop, and I would have a call." (St. L. III, 723.)

Here are a few more passages from Luther in which Luther speaks out about all kinds of proclamation of the Word to which all Christians are entitled. Concerning Ps. 110:4 he writes: "But if we have become Christians through this priest and his priestly office" (namely through Christ) "and have been incorporated into Him in Baptism through faith, then we also have the right and power to teach and confess the word that we have from him before everyone, each according to his calling and station. For although we are not all in public office and profession, every Christian should and may teach, instruct, admonish, comfort and punish his neighbor by the Word of God, when and where someone needs it, as a father and mother their children and servants, a brother, neighbor, citizen or farmer the other. For one Christian can instruct or admonish another who is still ignorant or weak about the ten commandments, faith, prayer, etc., and whoever hears it is obliged to accept it from him as God's Word and to confess it publicly." (St. L. V, 1038.) Luther deals with this subject in great detail in 1 Pet. 3:15: "Always be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you." Luther remarks on this (St. L. IX, 1233 ff.): "We must confess here that St. Peter spoke these words to all Christians, clergy, laity, men, women, young, old, and whatever their status; therefore it follows that every Christian should know the reason and cause of his faith and be able to give cause and answer where it is necessary. Now, until now, it has been forbidden for laymen not to read the Scriptures. For the devil has had a nice trick to tear people away from the Scriptures, and he thought thus: If I make the laymen not read the Scriptures, I will then bring the priests away from the Bible in Aristotle, so that they can do whatever they want; then the people must hear what they preach to them. Otherwise, if the laymen read the Scriptures, the priests would also have to study, so that they would not be punished and overcome. But look, what St. Peter tells us all that we must give an answer and give the reason for our faith. If you are to die,

I [Luther] will not be with you, nor will the Pope. If you do not know the reason for your hope and say: I believe as the Council, the Pope and our fathers believed, then the devil will answer: What if they (people) were wrong? So he has won and drags you into hell. Therefore we (we Christians) must know what we believe, namely, what God's Word is, not what the Pope or Council say or proclaim. For you must not trust in men at all, but in the pure Word of God (not in human interpretation of the Word). [Against Prof. Biermann] Therefore, if you are attacked as a heretic and asked why you believe that you will be saved by faith without works, answer: "I have the Word of God and the clear passages of Scripture, Romans 1:17: 'The just shall live by faith'; and 2 Pet. 2:6, where St. Peter, quoting Isaiah, speaks of the 'chief Corner-stone,' namely, Christ, and declares: 'Whoever believes in him will not be put to shame'; there I build up and know that the Word does not deceive me. But if you want to say, as other fools do, 'Well, we will hear what the council decides, and we will abide by it,' you are lost. Therefore thou shalt say, Why do I ask what this or that man believes or decides; if it is not the Word of God, I will not hear it. Yes, you say, it is a confusing thing about faith that no one knows what to believe; therefore one must wait until it is decided what to believe. Answer: You will go to the devil in the meantime. For when the time comes for you to die and you do not know what to believe, neither I nor anyone else can help you. Therefore you must know for yourself and turn to no one and stand firm on the Word of God if you want to escape the devil and hell. Therefore it is necessary that even those who cannot read should grasp and keep some clear passages from Scripture, at least one or two, and stand firm on the foundation, one of which is Gen 22:18, where God says to Abraham, 'In your seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed'. When you have grasped this, you can groan and say: "If the Pope, the bishops and all the councils stand and say otherwise, then I say: This is God's Word, it stands firm and does not lie; what is to be blessed must be blessed through this seed. What is blessing? It is to deliver from the curse, that is, from sin, death and hell. Therefore it follows from the saying: Whoever is not blessed by the seed will be lost; so my works and merits cannot help me to salvation. Thus concludes the saying of Isaiah 28:16: Whoever believes in the stone will not be put to shame. Therefore, if someone attacks you and demands the reason for your faith, answer: "There is the reason, I cannot lack it; therefore I ask nothing about what the Pope or bishops teach and sneak. If they were true bishops,

they should teach the reason of faith, that all Christians might know it in common; so they go on and cry out that the laity should not be allowed to read the Scriptures. Therefore, if you are asked whether you consider the pope to be a head, say: Yes, I consider him to be a head, not of the Christian church, which has Christ as its head, but of the devil's synagogue. Why? Because he is the Antichrist. For St. Paul says 1 Tim. 4:1 ff: ‘There shall come teachers of devils, who shall forbid marriage, and shall avoid the food which God hath created to be eaten with thanksgiving’, etc. This has ever been done by the Pope, as it is in the day; therefore he is the true Antichrist. For what Christ teaches and gives, he goes against. What Christ makes free, he binds. Christ says it is not sinful to eat all kinds of food, etc.; so the Pope says it is sinful.

"So now we must learn to give cause and answer of faith, for it will come to pass; if it does not come to pass in life, it will come to pass in death. Then the devil will come out and say: Why hast thou reproached the Pope as an Antichrist? If you are not prepared and do not know why, he has won. So here St. Peter wants to say: Because you have now become believers, you will have much persecution from now on, but in persecution you must have hope and wait for eternal life. If anyone asks you why you hope, you must have the Word of God to rely on. The sophists have also perverted this text, that one should overcome the heretics with reason and from Aristotle, the natural light, which is why the Latin says *rationem reddere*, as if St. Peter meant that one should do it with human reason. That is why they say that Scripture is far too weak to overthrow heretics, that it must be done with reason and come from the brain, from which it must be proved that faith is right, since our faith is above all reason and is the power of God alone. Therefore, if people do not want to believe, you should keep quiet; for you are not guilty of forcing them to take the Scriptures for God's book or word; it is enough that you give your reason. As if they should do so and say, "You preach that we should not hold the doctrine of men, when St. Peter and St. Paul, even Christ himself, were men. If you hear such people who are so blinded and hardened that they deny that this is God's Word, what Christ and the apostles have spoken and written, or doubt it, just keep quiet, don't say a word to them and let them go; just say this: I will give you reason enough from the Scriptures; if you want to believe it, go ahead; if not, go ahead. So you say: ‘Well, then, God's Word must stand with shame’. This God commands! Therefore it is necessary that we take heed and know how to meet those who now arise and pretend such foolishness."

The preaching of the Word by women, its legitimacy and its limitation.

It is a clear teaching of Scripture that the woman should also teach. According to Titus 2:3, the older women are to be teachers of the younger women. Example: Timothy is reported to have known the Scriptures from childhood because he had good teachers in his mother Eunice and grandmother Lois, as we see from 2 Timothy 1:5. Luther therefore wanted not only teachers, but also "female teachers" in the schools. (St. L. X, 477. 459.) But Scripture excludes women from teaching in public assembly before men. Two passages support this. 1 Tim. 2:11 ff.: "Let the woman learn in silence. … But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence. For Adam was first formed, then Eve." 1 Cor. 14:34-35: "Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak.… And if they will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the church." It has been objected that these are Oriental views that have no validity in the New Testament, especially in America, where we live far away from the Orient. To this it must be said: there is nothing in the text about restrictions to the Orient and to certain times. These passages show that the prohibition of teaching is valid for all regions and for all times until the Last Day. The very reason for the apostle's prohibition ("for Adam was made first, then Eve; and Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived") shows that the prohibition is binding for the Christian Church of all places and all times. The woman is to be a good teacher in her own circle, but not publicly before men. — It has also been asked in our midst whether women and girls could also be teachers in our parish schools. This teaching is perfectly acceptable as long as it is teaching children. Women should not be excluded from teaching children. But as soon as it is a matter of adult men, even adolescent boys, the woman is no longer in the right place with her teaching. Objection: However, in individual cases even in the Old Testament, women have taught by appearing, driven by the Holy Spirit, and instructing those present with God's Word, such as Miriam, Exodus 15:20-21. With regard to the example of Miriam, it must first be said that Miriam appears here as the leader of the women of Israel. But from the example of the judge and prophetess Deborah it can be seen that in special cases, at God's instigation, women appeared as teachers before men, Judges 4 and 5. To this we must say: If God makes exceptions to his rule, we cannot do the same. For us humans, the rule applies; we must leave the exceptions

to God. Luther says: "God hangs down the law, but He does not take it up again", that is, He acts as He wishes; we humans, however, remain bound by the rule. The objection that some women are smarter and more eloquent than men does not apply either. We have to admit that. God also knew that. Nevertheless, he gave order: "Let your women keep silence in the churches", 1 Cor. 14:34, and: "But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence. For Adam was first formed, then Eve", 1 Tim. 2:12-13.

The following applies to women's right to vote in the state: because the right to vote in the state implies participation in the rule over men, it is contrary to the natural order that God has made with regard to the relationship between man and woman. Again, the objection that women are often smarter than men, can make better election speeches and vote more intelligently does not apply. We are bound to the order God has made, Gen. 2:18; 1 Tim. 2:12-13, and the reversal of the Creator's order is severely avenged.

Thesis II. ^

The "lay movement" in financial terms.

Although the Old Testament order of tithing may not be laid on the conscience of New Testament Christians, it is and remains the divine order that New Testament Christians should give themselves and all their earthly goods to Christ and willingly make as much of it available to Him for His church as He needs at any time.

Two religious communities in the United States are reported to never lack funds. These are the Mormons and the Seventh-day Adventists. The reason given for this fact is that these communities have introduced tithing. People in other communities have also advocated the introduction of tithing. A certain Thomas Kane of Chicago has been sending pamphlets and books to all theological institutions at his own expense, urging all Christians to tithe their income for church purposes. Kane proves statistically that congregations and individuals who introduced the tithe contributed five and ten times as much for church purposes as in the past. We do not doubt the accuracy of these statistics. We are completely convinced that if all our Christians were to offer the tithe of their income to Christ for his kingdom, all lack of money would be ended in one fell swoop. In two writings that have come to our attention, Kane reproaches the professors at theological institutions for not advocating the tithe

emphatically enough. Professors and pastors are to blame for the church's lack of money.

What do we have to say about this? We do not, however, impose tithing as a duty on the conscience of New Testament Christians. And we do not do this because it would be contrary to Scripture. Tithing was God's order in the Old Testament, but it is not a divine order in the New Testament. The New Testament speaks often and much about giving for Christ's kingdom. But nowhere are Christians commanded to tithe. And what Christ did not command, the Church and one Christian must not command another. We want to hold strictly to this against the papacy and the sects. We do not want to allow ourselves to be robbed of the freedom with which Christ has liberated us.

But on the other hand, we also need to be reminded to the highest degree that we should not turn the freedom with which Christ has set us free into a cover for sin. Although tithing is not prescribed for us, "it is and remains the divine order that Christians of the New Testament should give themselves and all their earthly goods to Christ and willingly place as much at his disposal for his church as he needs at any time". This is scriptural teaching. Through faith in the gospel, Christians leave the kingdom of darkness and enter Christ's kingdom, the Christian church. When they enter, they bring everything they have with them: Body and soul with all their strength and also their earthly possessions. In the 60th chapter, the prophet Isaiah describes the entry of the nations into the Christian church like a large painting. "Lift up your eyes and look around you: all these gathered together are coming to you. Your sons will come from afar and your daughters will be brought up alongside. Then shalt thou see thy desire and break forth, and thine heart shall wonder and expand, when the multitude by the sea shall be converted unto thee, and the power of the Gentiles shall come unto thee. For the multitude of camels will cover you, the runners of Midian and Ephah", Is. 60:4-6. Truly, a magnificent painting! But the Holy Spirit has also drawn the "financial movement" into this magnificent, heart-lifting painting. The people who enter the church praising and singing also bring all their earthly goods, their gold and silver, with them. For the prophet continues in v. 6: "They will all come from Sheba, bringing gold and incense and proclaiming the praise of the Lord", and v. 9: "The isles are waiting for me, and the ships of the sea before me, to bring your children from afar, with their silver and gold, the name of the Lord your God and the Holy One in Israel, who made you glorious." I have said in passing at synods and also written in our magazines that we as a church are not poor in earthly goods, but rich, because the church possesses as many earthly goods as all its members

put together. I have therefore been called an optimist here and there, that is, a man who sees all things in a rosy light. But the optimistic view that the church possesses as much as its members put together is entirely Scriptural, as can be seen from the prophecy of the prophet Isaiah quoted above. Luther writes on Isaiah 60:6: "This must be the opinion of Isaiah, that the people of this land of Arabia will gather together in great multitudes for the faith and the gospel, and will give themselves there with all their goods, camels, cattle, gold, incense and whatever they have. For where there are true Christians, they give themselves and all they have to serve Christ and His own. As we see, it has also happened here on our side that great goods are given to the Church, and everyone willingly and gladly gives himself with all that he has to Christ and His own, as St. Paul also writes of the Philippians and Corinthians 2 Cor. 8, 1 ff." (St. L. XII, 312 f.) The situation is this: Christians as Christians are willing to place themselves with all their goods at the service of the Church and to offer what the Savior needs at all times. We can say with Luther: Even in our time, many are extremely willing to serve their Savior with their earthly goods. We know of cases in which not just a tithe of income is given, but 25 percent. We also have among us those who have imposed it upon themselves to tithe; also those who give 11 percent to distinguish themselves from the Jews; also those who have said: All that I gain in my business I put at the service of my Savior. Christians have many weaknesses. But insofar as they are Christians or new people, they give themselves completely to their Savior with everything they have, including their earthly goods. A St. Louis businessman who died a few years ago said: "I run my business for my Savior." And he didn't just talk like that, he also acted like that.

But of course, Christians are not entirely spirit, but also have the evil flesh in them. And according to the flesh they are stingy and always seek to withhold from Christ what he needs for his kingdom. When the Lord tells them that he needs their donkey for his entrance into the world, they first give their flesh the word and let the Lord say that they use their donkey themselves. And quite often the flesh has the last word in the matter. The Lord, who shed his blood for his own, cannot obtain the donkey he asked for from them. The flesh of Christians is just as evil and wicked. It is always necessary to strengthen the spirit through the gospel so that it may kill the business of the flesh. It is also necessary to keep the old man in check outwardly through punishment and threats, so that he does not hinder the business of the spirit too much.

1. The size of the gifts.

The question has been raised: Whence is it that the Christians of the New Testament are not prescribed the quantum of their gifts? Some members of our churches would like to have the quantity determined. When they see the success the Papists, Mormons, and Seventh-day Adventists have had with their giving laws, they are inclined to try the law. But we are not to do wrong to accomplish good; and we do wrong every time we go beyond God's Word with areas. In the Old Testament, tithing was commanded by God and had to be given. In the New Testament, however, the amount of gifts is free. The reason why in the New Testament the amount is left to the Christians and the legal provision of the tithe is abolished is given in Gal. 4:1 ff: "As long as the heir is a child, there is no difference between him and a servant, even though he is master of all, but he is under the guardians and caretakers until the appointed time from the father. So also we, when we were children, were in bondage under the outward statutes." In the New Testament, after Christ is fully revealed, Christians are no longer children, but spiritually mature people; therefore, Christians of the New Testament do God's will out of the willing spirit of sonship in a financial relationship, all that and more than what the people of the Old Testament were forced to do by external statutes. Thus Luther says, completely in accordance with Scripture: "In the Old Testament it was commanded that over and above all the annual tithes given to the Levites, they were to set aside a special tithe every three years for the poor, widows and orphans, and so on. Now, such giving is not specified by name in the New Testament, nor is it laid down by law; for it is a time of grace, when everyone is exhorted to do this voluntarily, as Paul says in Galatians 6:6: 'Let him who is instructed in the word share all good things with him who instructs him,' item v. 10: 'Let us do good to everyone, but especially to those who are of the household of faith. (XII, 337.) It is part of our Christian freedom that we determine the quantity of our gifts ourselves.

But it is a terrible abuse of Christian freedom when Christians use the freedom from tithing to give Christ as little or nothing as possible for his kingdom. They then use freedom to cover the wickedness of their flesh. They then do what the Apostle Peter warns against with the words: "As free men, and not as having liberty to cover yourselves with wickedness", 1 Peter 2:16. God has taken off the yoke of bondage, of compulsion, of tithing, from the New Testament Christians with the intention and expectation that they will now serve Him not less but more, willingly sacrifice to him in holy adornment,

place all their goods at his disposal and actually always hand over to him what he needs. And lo and behold, they now disappoint God, so to speak. God had his trouble with the Jews, who cheated him on the tithe and tried to break off either the quantity or the quality of the tithe. Read, for example, Mal. 1:8; 3:8 ff. In the latter passage it says: "Is it right for a man to deceive God as you have deceived me? Then say ye, Wherein do we deceive thee? In tithes and offerings." So God has his trouble with Christians even now. He has taken away their tithes with the intention that they will now serve him all the more diligently in freedom. But they abuse their freedom. Instead of giving about 11 percent in freedom, they use their freedom to pay God with 1 percent or even less. Someone has not inaccurately said that the weakest Christian should start in Christian freedom where the Jew left off, namely with 10 percent, and then strive in Christian freedom to get higher and higher. Some of us do that too. But we must also lament with Luther: many, many Christians misuse freedom to cover their wickedness! Of course, this abuse of freedom was already present in the apostolic church, and Paul describes it as a mockery of God with the words: "Do not be deceived; God is not mocked." Gal. 6:7. According to the context, the apostle is speaking here of the giving of Christians. The flesh of Christians in the apostolic church was just as wicked as the flesh of Christians in our time. That is why the apostle Paul uses such strong, frightening words: "Do not be mistaken; God cannot be mocked!" This abuse of Christian freedom was also to be found in Luther's time. It is well known what bitter complaints Luther made about it. He says: "Before, when the devil was served in the papacy, everyone was merciful and mild; then they gave with both hands cheerfully and with great devotion to maintain the false worship. Now, when people should be mild, give gladly and show gratitude to God for the holy gospel, everyone wants to perish and die of hunger, no one wants to give anthing, but only take. Formerly, any city, when it was large, could amply feed several monasteries, not to mention the sacristans and rich monasteries; now, if only two or three persons who preach God's Word, administer the sacrament, visit and comfort the sick, instruct the youth honestly and Christianly, are to be fed in a city, and moreover not from their own property but from that of others, which has been left over from the papacy, everyone is hard put to it." (St. L. XI, 301.) In another place Luther says: "In the papacy there was no measure, and there was no end to giving and giving to maintain the ungodly, false worship. Hence came the monasteries and convents, the princely bishoprics, the vast empires of cardinals and popes; there the devil was able to blow against Christ and

drive people to such weariness and ungodly gifts. For such things were pleasing to him, and the people thus served the idolatry and blasphemy that was publicly taught at that time. That is why the bullfinches, bishops and abbots had everything to themselves, even though they were a "public nuisance" to the whole world. They have become fat, strong and fat." On the other hand, Luther says of the treatment of real teachers in his time in some places: "Look at the parish priests in the villages now and then, how so many of them have to languish miserably from hunger and thirst, and often have not enough to buy their children a shirt." (St. L. II. 1235 f.)

Thank God, things are not as bad here as they were in Luther's time. Luther had to deal with regional church conditions, which he also lamented. He had not yet reached the point — which he did strive for — of gathering together and separating from the world those who seriously wanted to be Christians. In our American Lutheran Church we have this gathering of those who earnestly want to be Christians. Those who want to belong to the world remain outside our congregations from the outset. But the abuse of Christian freedom with regard to giving to the gospel, which we have so abundantly, is also found in our midst. We would have to close our eyes to obvious facts if we did not want to admit this, and by God's grace we must seek to put an end to this abuse of Christian freedom. We owe it to our Savior; we owe it to the Church. We owe it to ourselves, as will be explained in more detail.

2. The danger of small gifts.

The small gifts have their great honor. The smallest gifts will be honored until the Last Day wherever there is a Holy Scripture. For Scripture tells us of the widow's "mite", who put a penny into the treasury, that the mite was a greater gift than the gifts of the rich; for they had put in all that they had, all their food, out of the rest, but the widow out of her poverty, Mark 12:41-44, so the smallest gift may have the highest price. But alas, when the "mite" is misused by those who are not poor widows, but who have plenty of earthly goods, to seek the smallest possible gifts and to soothe their conscience with the "widow's mite"! In so many cases, the widow's mite is turned into a cover for avarice by the devil's deceit. Let us pay attention to the dangers that are often associated with small gifts!

1. Seeking small and few gifts is against God's will. Holy Scripture warns against meager giving

and exhorts us to give abundantly when it says: "He who sows meagerly will also reap meagerly; and he who sows in blessing will also reap in blessing". 2 Cor. 9:6. And the apostle praises the churches in Macedonia: "Although they were very poor, they gave generously in all simplicity", 2 Cor. 8:2.

2. Small gifts in many cases spoil the quality of the gifts; that is, small gifts often reveal that one does not give to his Savior and does not give gladly. Of course, there are also small things in which small gifts are quite appropriate. If, for example, a congregation were to arrange for its Sunday collections to raise the salary of the churchwarden, this would still have a certain connection with the church, but larger gifts would obviously not be appropriate in this case, since it is only a matter of raising a small sum. This is where the penny and nickel offerings are most appropriate. But when it comes directly to the great things of the kingdom of God, to the preaching of the gospel in the world, to missions. teaching institutions, etc., i.e. the things that Christians are actually still in this world to do and the world is still standing (Matt. 24:14): if in this case we strive for the smallest possible gifts. There is a great danger that we do not think of our Savior at all, that we do not sacrifice to Him, but only give mechanically in order to maintain the appearance of giving. When we think of our Savior, who has given himself so completely for us and now wants us to place ourselves out of gratitude at the service of the preaching of the Gospel: when we think of this, it necessarily entails that we do not strive for the smallest possible gifts, but for the greatest possible gifts. Seeking small gifts in this case does not prove willingness to serve Christ in holy adornment, but the opposite, unwillingness and stinginess. Thus even the small gifts become completely worthless before God. It is easy for self-deception to creep in here, even among Christians, as a result of the stingy flesh that still clings to us. It happens that a Christian feels that he could and should give more for the gospel than he actually does. He feels that the quantity of his gift is not at all in proportion to his means and to the greatness of the cause. But nevertheless, he sticks with the small gift and agonizes inwardly to replace the lack of quantity with quality, by convincing himself that he wants to give his small gift "right from the heart". The phrase "little, but from the heart" may be fully justified if someone really has very little. We then come close to the glory of the widow's mite. But if our conscience warns us that we could and should give more in view of our means and in view of the importance of the matter, then the "little but from the heart" can easily mask a self-deception. All

inward pressure for quality will be in vain and will not make up for the lack of quantity. Instead, we should remember another saying: "*Quality goes with quantity*." So let us also pay careful attention to the quantity of our gifts! The Lord will give us understanding in all things.

3. The pursuit of small gifts also has its great danger when we look at the reward. God has placed a glorious reward, a reward of grace, on all the gifts we give him. From this we recognize the great grace and goodness of our God. God gives us heaven and salvation completely free of charge, without any merit of works on our part, solely for the sake of Christ's perfect merit. "By grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast," Eph. 2:8. But God is gracious and kind beyond measure. If we serve him in vain, that is, merely out of gratitude for the mercy shown to us in Christ, it should not be "in vain" inasmuch as he wants to crown all the works done for him with a glorious reward of grace eternally. So the good works of Christians are worth a tremendous amount. Luther says that they are worth more than the whole world. The world and all that is in it will burn up on the Last Day; but the good works of Christians will not burn up, but will follow them, Revelation 14:13. Therefore we should not strive for small gifts, but for great gifts for Christ and his gospel. The Holy Spirit reminds us of this when He says in Scripture: "He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows in blessing will also reap in blessing", 2 Cor. 9:6. We are only wise stewards of the earthly goods that God has given us if we give back to our God with full hands. There are many fools in the world. The whole unbelieving world is foolish. But Christians are the greatest fools when they strive for as small and few gifts as possible with the available resources.

4. By striving for small gifts, the Christian causes himself constant offense by leading himself to doubt his state of grace and the truth of the Christian religion. According to Scripture, good works should also be done for the purpose of having an outward witness to our faith. We have the inner witness of the Holy Spirit to our sonship in God through faith in the gospel, which the Holy Spirit works and sustains in us. But the Holy Spirit, who dwells in our hearts through faith, now also impels us to good works, and indeed also for the purpose that we can also read the testimony from our works: "You are a child of God, because you love the brethren, love God's Word, his Church on earth

is above all things to you", etc. Just as Christian works do not come from the flesh, but only from the Spirit, we have in our Christian works the external testimony of the Holy Spirit — *externum Spiritus Sancti testimonium*, as our old teachers say — to our state of grace. In this sense Scripture says of sanctification and good works: "Wherefore, brethren, be diligent to make your calling and election sure" (2 Pet. 1:10). In the same sense our Lutheran confession says: "As in other sacraments Christ attaches the promise to the outward sign, so here also he attaches the promise of forgiveness of sin to outward good works." (Apology, p. 134). (Apology, p. 134.) What do we do, therefore, if we are as industrious in sanctification and good works as we are stingy in the gifts of the gospel? By striving for small gifts we constantly bear witness to ourselves: "Your Christianity is in a bad state." The doubt about our state of grace is certainly in many cases also caused by our stinginess in giving for the kingdom of God.

5. But the desire for small gifts also easily becomes an offence to the unbelieving world. Just as the world keeps a sharp eye on the conduct of Christians in general, so it does in particular on the gifts of Christians for their church. The world rejoices when it sees a Christian fall, and telegraphs it over the whole continent, because it sees in it a welcome excuse for its unbelief. For the same reason it rejoices immensely when it perceives that Christians have to complain of constant financial embarrassment in their supposedly so important cause and even resort to gambling and dubious entertainments in order to drive out money. Judgment Day will reveal how many of the world's children have been vexed and lost by the stinginess of Christians in giving to the Gospel. [Andrew] Carnegie literally peddles his mockery of the Christians' meagre gifts. At a recent banquet in the East, he asked why the Scots had a particularly small coin, not otherwise in use in England, in circulation. (The name of the coin escapes me.) When no one knew the answer, he answered the question himself: the particularly small coin was in the world so that the Scots could fulfill their duty to the Church. Well, Carnegie cannot excuse his unbelief with the sins of the Christians. That the world is angry is and remains their fault. The Lord says: "Woe to the world of offense!" Who the Lord also adds: "But woe to that man through whom offense comes!" Matt. 18:17. Let us also remember this when giving for Christ's kingdom and, by God's grace, not walk in this respect for the world, but in an edifying way.

6. Those who seek small gifts also easily cause offense to their pastors. Pastors are still human and are challenged by fear of man. When they see the unwillingness to give and even hear words like these: "Eternal begging!" they lose the courage to insist on God's Word and will. They bend the yardstick and say: "At least give of the rest!" But where does it say in Scripture that Christians should give from what is left over? Christians are not prescribed any quantity, nor time or hour, for their gifts. But God's will for them is that they should give gladly and willingly, and that giving for the kingdom of God should be their priority or first priority. "Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things" — the needs for earthly life — "will be added to you", Matthew 6:33. Such passages as this: "Give at least of what you have left" are contrary to God's Word. We cannot forgive our Christians the truth that they must first serve the kingdom of God even with their earthly goods. Of course, the goal will never be fully achieved. The flesh will hinder complete obedience. But Christians should recognize the deficiency in this as deficiency and sin. They should humble themselves before God because of this sin, beg forgiveness for it for Christ's sake and ask God for strength to force the ungodly, stingy flesh more and more under them. We know that Christians will not achieve complete sanctification in other things either. But that does not mean that we are distorting the goal they should strive for. We do not say to them: "Avoid at least the grossest excesses of the flesh", but we urge them: "Therefore, beloved, since we have this hope, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of the flesh and spirit and continue in sanctification through the fear of God", 2 Cor. 7:1. In the same way, we must not change the goal of Christians to give first to the kingdom of God. Otherwise we would fall into antinomianism, perhaps — to paraphrase Luther — be good Easter preachers, but shameful Pentecostal preachers. Let us only confidently tell the Christians the divine truth concerning this point! We have the Christians, insofar as they are Christians, completely on our side. Even the weakest Christian, Walther reminds us, wants to live completely according to the new man for his Savior, who bought him with his blood of God.

7. He who seeks small gifts grieves the Holy Spirit who dwells in him. Every Christian, even the weakest, is a temple of the Holy Spirit. With faith in the forgiveness of sins acquired by Christ, the Holy Spirit enters our hearts. "Do you not know," the apostle calls out to all Christians, "that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?"

1 Cor 3:16 And the Holy Spirit is active in us. He fills us with love for God and our neighbor. He also impels us to give willingly and abundantly of our earthly goods to Christ for His kingdom. If we do not follow the inner teaching and impulse of the Holy Spirit, we grieve the Holy Spirit and may well drive him out of our hearts altogether. Many a man has lost faith and salvation by closing his heart to the needs of the kingdom of God.

8. Those who seek small gifts hinder the building of the kingdom of God on earth. But that is no small thing. In order for the kingdom of God to be established here on earth, the Son of God became man and shed his blood on the cross. "Christ had to suffer and rise from the dead on the third day and have repentance and forgiveness of sins preached in his name among all nations", Luke 24:46-47. The world still stands for the preaching of the gospel, Matthew 24:14. We Christians, who actually belong in heaven, are also still in this world for the preaching of the gospel. Yes, it is through us that the preaching is to take place. That is the divine order. Christ wants to use our prayers, our mouths and also our earthly possessions to preach the gospel. How terrible if we hinder the building of Christ's kingdom on earth by refusing our earthly goods!

9. He who seeks small gifts prevents God from giving him abundant earthly goods. God acts according to the rule which he has published very clearly and distinctly in Luke 6:38 and in many other places: "Pray and it will be given to you." This does not seem to apply in individual cases, because God's ways are often wonderfully intertwined with individual people, so that we cannot find the threads apart. God sees what our human eye cannot see, namely why a person needs poverty or a little earthly good in order to stay on the narrow path to eternal life. But in most cases we humans will also be able to perceive that God gives back abundantly to the abundant giver. I know people in the Synod who have given generously. They gave abundantly for the gospel, so abundantly that they were warned by cautious friends not to give too much. But they kept on giving and, to everyone's amazement, became more and more prosperous. Even from heavy business losses they recovered surprisingly quickly. God dealt with them according to his word: "Pray and it will be given to you." I have also known people who were poor. When it came to giving for the gospel, they not only sought small gifts, but used certain circumstances to avoid giving altogether, and lo and behold, their financial prosperity went downhill. And what they passed on to their descendants did not prosper them either, because it was

"*tainted money*". This is cursed money that you keep in your possession or inherit, which you have withheld from the Savior for the Gospel. God have mercy on us all! May He make us recognize the sin of avarice, repent of it, obtain forgiveness through the blood of Christ and then resist the cursed avarice! — But aren't Christians also often poor because, out of fear of God, they don't reap some of the profits through which worldly people enrich themselves? Most certainly. Scripture refers to this case when it says in Psalm 37:16: "The little that a righteous man has is better than the great wealth of many wicked men." But in many, many cases, the poverty or small possessions of Christians is also due to the fact that they give so little for God's kingdom. God speaks to his people through Malachi: "Bring all the tithes into my granary, that there may be food in my house, and prove me herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, whether I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out an abundance of blessing." Mal. 3:10. This applies not only to the Old Testament, but also to the New, as we see from Luke 6:33: "Pray, and it will be given to you. A measure full, pressed down, shaken, and overflowing will be given into your bosom; for with the same measure that you measure, it will be measured to you again."

10. He who seeks small gifts for the gospel brings God's wrath on himself and the land in which he lives. Read the first chapter of the prophet Haggai. The Jews had returned from captivity and eagerly set about gathering goods and building their own houses. After they had gathered and built enough for themselves, they also wanted to build the Lord's house. Through the prophet Haggai, God tells the people of the impropriety of this procedure: "This people says, 'The time has not yet come to build the Lord's house. But your time has come to dwell in paneled houses, and this house must stand desolate?" But the prophet also clearly indicates what punishment will follow this sin. He says: "See how it is with you: you sow much and bring in little ... so that my house stands desolate and everyone hastens to his own house. Therefore the heavens have withheld the dew from you, and the earth its fruit. And I have called the drought, both over land and mountains." In the New Testament, God speaks no less sharply about the same sin: "Do not err; God is not mocked!" If we have drought and other plagues in the land, this is certainly a punishment for the unbelieving world, which does not respect God's Word and does not thank God for physical goods. But we Christians should also examine ourselves at such times to see whether we too have not become a blight on the land through our ingratitude and stinginess in giving to the gospel. The world is blind. But we Christians are wise people. We Christians know that all earthly gifts come from God. We also know that through Christ we have

heaven and salvation. Moreover, we know that God gives and leaves us spiritual and bodily goods primarily for the purpose of serving the preaching of the gospel. If we build our own houses and leave the Lord's house desolate, then we must regard drought and other plagues as the judgment of God, which begins first with the house of God, that is, with Christians. Then it is time to repent, to organize public services of repentance and to give up seeking small gifts for the Gospel. Luther explains this in his preface to the prophet Haggai. Luther concludes this preface with the words: "God wants to eat with us, otherwise He will not give us anything to eat."

11. Finally, whoever seeks small gifts instead of rich gifts for the preaching of the gospel causes God to withdraw the gospel from him. That is the end, the greatest misfortune that can come upon us. Luther's complaints about Germany are well known. He says again and again that in his time Germany had the Gospel as bright and pure as never before. But Germany was lazily and casually opposing the Gospel. Only a few were willing to give for it. God would punish deep sin with the withdrawal of the gospel. He writes: "They (the ungrateful) will lose both the physical and the spiritual. For this sin must necessarily be followed by the most severe punishments, and I truly believe that the churches in Galatia, Corinth, etc. were destroyed by the false prophets for no other reason than because they neglected their true teachers." (St. L. IX, 748.) Let this also be said to us as a warning. We now have the gospel as clear and pure as the Christians of the apostles' time. Now let us see to it that we show ourselves thankful to God for it, also by willing and abundant giving for the gospel, so that it may be preserved with us and spread far and wide through us. "That we have the gospel and the ministry of preaching," says Luther, "what is it but the blood and sweat of our Lord? He has acquired it through his fearful, bloody sweat. ... Shall Christ, the Son of God, have earned nothing else with it among us, except that some persecute such his dearly acquired office, etc., while others withdraw their hand, neither feed pastors nor preachers, nor give anything to maintain it; about which the children also turn away from it, so that such an office may soon come to an end and Christ's blood and torture be in vain, etc.? If this is how it is to be in German lands, I am sorry that I was born a German or that I have ever spoken or written in German. And if I could do so before my conscience, I would again advise and help that the pope with all his abominations should come upon us again and oppress, ravish and corrupt us more than ever before. Before, when the devil was served and Christ's blood was desecrated,

all bags were open and there was no measure of giving to churches, schools and all abominations; then children could be driven into monasteries, convents, churches and schools, pushed and forced at unspeakable cost, so that all was lost. Now, however, proper schools and proper churches are to be founded ... no one can give in, all the bags are closed with iron chains, etc. I pray to God for a merciful hour, that he will take me away and not let me see the misery that must befall Germany. ... God grant that I may have to lie and be a false prophet in this matter, which would happen if we improved ourselves and honored our Lord's Word and his precious blood and death differently than has happened so far." (St. L. X, 456 f.)

The salary of the preachers and teachers of the Word of God.

Luther says in his explanation of Galatians that he does not like to speak of this subject because it has an appearance of selfishness and avarice. And we all agree with him. Nevertheless, we cannot refrain from talking about it because it is part of the proclamation of the doctrine of Scripture. Luther writes the following about Galatians 6:7: "Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that will he also reap", among other things: "All this belongs to the doctrine of the livelihood of preachers. I do not like to interpret such passages. For they seem to boast of us (preachers), as indeed they boast of us. Then it has an appearance of avarice when one tries to impress this on the listeners with great diligence. But people must also be taught about this so that they know that they owe their teachers reverence and sustenance. Christ teaches the same thing in Luke 10:7, saying: "Eat and drink what they have, for a laborer is worthy of his wages. And Paul 1 Cor. 9:13-14: "Do you not know that those who offer sacrifices eat from the sacrifice, and those who tend the altar enjoy the altar? So also the Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should feed on the gospel'" (St. L. IX, 749.) Let us now also speak of this point on the basis of Scripture.

If we pay close attention to Scripture, we find that it presents two different lessons concerning this delicate point, one lesson for the churches and another lesson for the preachers and teachers. It warns both sides against selfishness and avarice. It tells the churches that they are obliged to provide willingly and abundantly for the people who tell them the Word of God. On the other hand, Scripture admonishes teachers to minister with the Word, not for shameful gain, but for Christ's sake, and also to be willing to forsake their right.. Much misunderstanding and disorder has arisen in the church at all times from the mixing of these lessons. The exhortations addressed to teachers to serve without avarice for Christ's sake have

been abused by congregations to pay teachers as small a salary as possible, and conversely the exhortations addressed to congregations to provide for their teachers in debt and abundance have been abused by the latter to seek their own, and not Christ's, interest in the teaching office. Thus, on the one hand, the apostle Paul must warn the churches of his time against sin on this point, even with the terrible threat: "Do not err; God will not be mocked!" On the other hand, he also complains about certain teachers of his time: "They all seek their own, not the things of Christ Jesus", Phil. 2:21.

1. The lesson for the congregations, that is, for the Christians who are ministered to with the Word by certain persons who are placed by God in the ministry of the Word through the churches. God's Word clearly teaches that the bodily care of these persons is not a work of mercy, such as is done to the poor and needy without return, but is to be regarded as a work of duty and obligation, just as a laborer is entitled to the wages he has earned. It is also not uncommon to find among us the false idea that the congregations that provide their pastors and teachers with physical sustenance are doing a work of mercy, like giving alms to the needy. Scripture protests against this view from beginning to end. This saying: "A laborer is worthy of his wages" is referred to in the New Testament primarily to those who labor in the Word and in teaching. When the Lord Christ speaks in Matthew 10 about how his messengers earn their living, he says: "A laborer is worthy of his hire." "Eat and drink what they have." And when the apostle of Christ comes to the same point, the physical provision of the preachers, he again uses this word: "A laborer is worthy of his hire", 1 Tim. 5:18. According to Scripture, withholding the wages due is one of the so-called heaven-defying sins. Scripture expressly says Jer 22:13: "Woe to the man who makes his neighbor work for nothing and does not give him his wages!" and James 5:4: "The wages of the laborers who have reaped your land and broken off from you, cry out." This also applies to the wages owed to those who work in the ministry of the Word of God.

It has been objected that Scripture also says: "You received it for free, give it for free" (Matthew 10:8). This word of Christ remains completely untouched. What teachers and preachers give, offer and distribute through their work in the Word, through the proclamation of the gospel, namely God's grace and salvation, is of such infinite value that it cannot be paid for with all the silver and gold in the world. This is a good that God himself has purchased with his blood of God. If a church were to give a salary of

hundreds of thousands to those who minister to it with the word, what the pastors give through the gospel would still be given in vain. What should the preachers be paid for? The work, the hard work. When someone provides a congregation with God's Word, it involves a lot of work, a lot of study, sighing, praying, physical, mental and spiritual effort. And this physical labor should be rewarded. That is why Scripture says, especially with regard to preachers: "A laborer is worthy of his hire." Luther: "My ministry is only a service which I am to render to everyone freely and for nothing, seeking neither money nor goods, neither honor nor anything else. ... But trust, if I do this, you will be obliged to feed me again afterwards." (St. L. VII, 1040 f.) This is not a purchase as in worldly trade. In worldly trade, the goods and the purchase price correspond. This is not possible in the preaching ministry. The shab is too great. It is given for free and received for free. But the preacher's work should be rewarded.

The following story of a Negro preacher was recalled here. Whether it is history or fiction remains to be seen. In any case, it expresses the simple truth. "*A negro parson had labored faithfully in his congregation without receiving any material remuneration. Having no other means of livelihood, he finally appealed to the congregation for a stipulated salary. Consternation was written on the faces of the members. Finally one of them recovered his breath sufficiently to remonstrate: 'But, pahson, de Holy Book tells us dat de water of life am free.' The parson, however, was equal to the occasion and settled the matter by saying: 'Dat's true, brudder, but de congregation mus' pay for de pipin'.*"

One more word from Luther should be noted. Luther says: "If we take our livelihood from the congregation, this is not a payment that should be considered equal to this gift, which is so great and expensive that it could not be paid for with the whole world's goods. But because such a great and abundant gift cannot be distributed in any other way than through people who must have food and drink, they must be nourished and maintained. But this is not payment for the gift, but for their toil and labor." (St. L. I, 1624.)

Thus it is clear that, according to Holy Scripture, the physical care of teachers is not at the discretion of Christians, but is divine order or commanded by God. The apostle Paul makes this clear by his own example. In 1 Cor. 9 he says to the Corinthians: I have taken nothing from you, nor will I take anything from you. He would rather die than take wages from the Corinthians. Why? The circumstances in Corinth were such that Paul would have been suspected of preaching for the sake of earthly gain by taking wages. That is why he worked with his hands to earn a living for himself and his

family. But lest anyone refer to him and say: "Because the apostle did not take a salary, all other preachers should not claim a salary either", the apostle explains in the same chapter that his actions were outside the divine order. He adds: "The Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should feed on the gospel", v. 14.

How much should the teachers of the New Testament be given for their work? We have heard that all legal compulsion, including tithing, is abolished in the New Testament. God expects New Testament Christians to do what is right without lawful order. Yet Scripture clearly teaches that Christians should provide for their preachers and teachers. Just as Christians should not seek a small gift for the gospel in general, so they should not seek to give their preacher as small a salary as possible. 1 Timothy 5:17 says: "The elders who preside are to be held in double honor." "Twofold honor" here is not a double bow, a double greeting, a double removal of hats and the like, but "honor" here is the physical provision, honorarium, salary. This is clear from the context: "thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn", v. 18. In the Old Testament there was a very strange order: the oxen that treaded out the grain were to be allowed to do their work with their mouths muzzled. There are some examples in the Old Testament whose meaning is only revealed to us in the New Testament. Here, in 1 Timothy 5 and 1 Corinthians 9, the apostle explains why the mouths of working animals should not be muzzled. God did not do this for the sake of the oxen, says the apostle in 1 Corinthians 9:9, but it was intended that the laborers who do the hardest work should not have their labor unrewarded. And these are the "workers in the word and in teaching". This is how Scripture itself explains this type.

People have asked: Is it an "honor" to give a worker wages for his work, to reward him accordingly? Indeed it is! The outward honor, the outward recognition of the worker is his reward. You can do no greater dishonor to a worker than to give him a very low wage for honest and valuable work. You are actually saying to a worker: "You are worth little or nothing as a worker." Employers should remember that. They should strive to pay their workers as high a wage as possible, i.e. one that corresponds to their work, and thereby give the worker the honor he deserves. If they do not do this, they should know that the breaking of the workers' wages cries out to God and will be visited by God with severe punishment. But what are we to say when Christian congregations strive to give the smallest possible wages to those who work diligently

and with all the strength of body and soul in God's Word and teaching, and thus do not honor this highest work, but declare it inferior? We should say to this: This is displeasing to God, for God says in his word that the workers in the word and in teaching should be held in "double honor". I have been told — I have not experienced it myself — that in earlier times statements like this were made in churches: "The smaller the pastor's salary, the better the pastor preaches, because he then remains under the cross." Woe to such an attitude! A preacher may well groan under the cross if he has barely the bare necessities for himself and his family, even with modest demands. But this is not good for the church, as God's Word expressly says in Hebrews 13:17. If we want to lay a cross on our neighbor, it is both foolishness and ungodliness. Laying on a cross is a privilege of God, because God alone knows for whom a cross is good and of what kind it should be. If we lay a cross on our neighbor, it can happen that the neighbor collapses under the cross and we ruin the one to whom we, in our folly and presumption, wanted to give a benefit. Luther complains that in his day preachers were induced to leave the preaching ministry because of their meager salaries. The same may have happened in our time. That is not right on the part of the preachers. But the congregations are certainly not blameless either if they provide meagerly for their preachers and teachers without just cause. Incidentally, we can also point to congregations in our midst that now provide amply for their preachers after the preachers have endured their poverty. They say: "Our preachers have shared our poverty with us; now they should also share in our prosperity."

2. The lesson for preachers and teachers. Pastors and teachers should take care that they do not fall into a worldly sense and avarice, which happens when the real aim of their ministry is to provide for earthly needs and to maximize their salary. Holy Scripture warns the teachers of the Word against this harmful and shameful deviation in many places. The apostle Peter writes: "Feed the flock of Christ as you are commanded, and watch carefully, not under compulsion but willingly, not for shameful gain but from the heart", 1 Pet. 5:2, and the apostle Paul admonishes pastors: "No man of war entangles himself in the affairs of this life", 2 Tim. 2:4. True men of war do not see their life's work in foraging, but they leave it to the commissary department to supply their rations. Thus the preachers feed the flock of Christ that is commanded to them; that is the content and goal of their activity, and in doing so they have confidence in Christ that He will also provide for them in the physical, if not always abundantly, at least in a sufficient way. Admittedly, pastors in our synod have also

suffered real hardship in some cases, but as far as we know, there has never been a case of a pastor in our Synod starving to death. Indeed, we expect our pastors, like the apostle Paul in 1 Cor. 9:9, to preach under certain circumstances even without a salary. These will only be temporary conditions. But through the work of the Holy Spirit the same attitude should be found in us as in the apostle Paul. It is part of a pastor's ministry that, if need be, he will lay down his life in the pursuit of his ministry. Under certain circumstances he will also be able to do without a salary. And especially if it is only a matter of undue reduction in physical care. The fact is, however, that in most cases the pastors of our Synod are not treated according to the divine order: "A laborer is worthy of his hire" and: Those who labor in the word and in teaching are considered worthy of "double honor". Worldly people beat their hands over their heads when they hear how little money many of our pastors are paid and how much effort they put into church and school. Worldly people point out that they could not get a "decent clerk" for the pastor's salary that is usual in many of our churches. Nevertheless, our pastors are not "on strike". It has become customary in some places for sect pastors to form unions and strike" "*for higher salaries*". We do not do that, but continue to work cheerfully when congregations — or even the Synod — do not do to us what is right and proper. We remember that the Lord Christ was not treated correctly financially when he preached here on earth. Neither were his apostles. Neither did Luther. But Luther says with regard to this point: "What do we care about that?" Our reimbursement and retribution in heaven will be so great that we will also "greatly reproach" ourselves for not having suffered more. (St. L. II, 1237.)

Luther warns against the pursuit of earthly goods, especially in the preaching ministry. He writes, for example: "One sees by daily experience what a shameful, cursed vice avarice is and what harm it does, especially in high offices and estates, spiritual and secular. For if the devil of avarice possesses the heart of a pastor or preacher, so that he seeks only how he may bring great good for himself like the rest of the world, he is already thrown into the devil's jaws like Judas the traitor, that he might betray Christ with his word and his church for the sake of a penny." (St. L. XI, 1319.) With us pastors and teachers, as Luther also reminds us, it should be like this: "Everything we do in this world, we do together only for God's glory, so that many people may be converted and saved." (St. L. II, 1237.) May God grant and preserve us pastors and teachers of such a disposition! Without such an attitude we cannot be true servants of Christ. Of course, our congregations

should not misuse this attitude for their own avarice. They should not think: "Our pastor is faithful and diligent and content with his low salary. But he is so contented and pious that he is not likely to run away from us if we give him a hundred or even a few hundred dollars less." That is mixing up the lessons of Scripture. For the pastors it says: not for avarice, not for shameful gain. For the congregations it says: Those who labor in the word and in teaching are to be held in double honor. "Every man learn his lesson, and it will prosper in the house."

I would like to remind us pastors and teachers of one more thing. Even if we work so faithfully in our ministry that people have to give us a testimony of faithfulness: before God we confess our bungling in work, in diligence, in prayer and in intercession. We say to God with regard to our ministry: "Do not enter into judgment with your servant!" If we thus have to confess our bungling before God and ask for merciful forbearance, then we are also content in God that our churches are only doing bungling with us with regard to the repayment of our work. And how is it then? Are we unhappy people? It has often been said to me, "There are no happier people in the whole world than Missouri pastors and teachers." This is consistent with my experience at conferences and synods. Faithfully serving others by God's grace, especially faithfully serving with God's Word, makes happy and joyful people. With regard to this very point, the apostle Paul says in Acts 20:35: "It is more blessed to give than to receive."

The cause and cure of financial sluggishness.

Where does the financial sluggishness that we so often notice among us come from?

1. The sluggishness comes from the God-alienated flesh, which Christians also still have in them. If Christians were completely spiritual, they would also do everything God wants them to do financially, namely, they would come running with their earthly goods to provide their Savior with as much as he needs. They would also constantly inquire whether their Savior could use more of their goods. But the flesh of Christians is just as evil as the flesh of the world, as Luther often reminds us. Of course, the business of the flesh must be put to death, including the business of the miserly flesh. But this is difficult work and never succeeds completely.

2. Sloth comes from evil habit. It is often an inheritance from state church circumstances. In the state churches, little or nothing was given for church purposes because the state usually covered the costs of church and school. We live here in

a church that is independent of the state and are happy about that. But when it comes to giving to the church, we often still behave like the state church. And sluggishness does not always die out with the first generation but, like other diseases, is passed on to the second and third generations.

3. Sloth comes from the devil's special deception. The devil is always out to make Christianity contemptible and to hinder the kingdom of Christ. He achieves his deep purpose when he succeeds in keeping Christians from giving to the gospel. How the preaching of the gospel has been held up among us to this day because the necessary earthly means were not available!

4. There is also a partial lack of clarity in the doctrine of justification. It is thought that the doctrine of the justification of the sinner without the works of the law is harmed if one insists energetically and continuously on good works and especially on the fact that Christians should above all serve the kingdom of Christ with their earthly goods. But this is an erroneous opinion. The more seriously we teach good works in a Christian manner, the more powerfully we preach the gospel. After all, we don't bring about good works through the threats of the law, but by attracting and enticing with the divine mercy that has been shown to us in Christ Jesus. Luther famously says that good works are done from heaven. If we want to make our Christians willing to be sanctified and to do good works, then we always do one thing first: we lift them up to heaven. We remind them that through Christ, their Savior, they have free forgiveness of all their sins and heaven freely. When we remind Christians of this, they rejoice with great joy, gratitude wells up in their hearts and they want to lay down their lives for their Savior. And if we then say to the Christians: For the time being, it is not yet a question of laying down one's life for the Savior. That may come later. But at present the Savior wants to have your donkey for his entry into this world: then the Christians are very happy and let him have the donkey and the colt. In this way, every Christian exhortation to give becomes a reason to preach the gospel fully, completely and unadulterated.

But here we have already come to the cure for laziness. When we get cold and freeze, we stand by the fire. When we Christians realize that our love for our Saviour and for service in His kingdom is growing cold, then we place ourselves before the fire of divine love that has appeared to us in Christ Jesus. This warms the heart and solves "the problem of giving", which unfortunately requires so much talking and writing. In one form or another, we have an image

of our Savior in our home, such as a crucifix. When it comes to gifts for the gospel, and we look at the head crowned with thorns, then our gifts automatically take on the right quality and also the right quantity. We give willingly and abundantly. These are not my thoughts, but this is how the Holy Spirit teaches, e.g. 2 Cor. 8. There the apostle exhorts Christians to give, and in order to achieve the right quality and quantity of gifts, he brings the cross of Christ before their eyes. V. 9: "You know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he was poor." If we follow this method, follow it unceasingly, the "financial movement" of Christians will not fail to materialize.

External aids. Christians will only and can only give to the gospel with understanding, willingly and to the right extent if they are familiar with what is going on in the church and with the needs of the church. Here again, two kinds of people need to be reminded of their lesson.

1 We pastors. It is the pastor's duty to make the Christians under his charge continually aware of the Savior's need for their earthly good. The pastor has an official duty to ensure that the Christians under his charge also become rich in good works, accumulate a great store of good works in this life and thus reap an eternal reward of grace on the Last Day. If the pastor fails to do this, he is not fully fulfilling his ministry. The first and main fruit of teaching the gospel is, of course, faith in Christ and salvation. But the good works of Christians are also a purpose of teaching the gospel. The apostle Paul urges Titus: "This is what I want you to teach firmly, so that those who have believed in God may be found in a state of good works", Titus 3:8, and soon afterwards (v. 14) again: "But let ours also learn that they may be found in a state of good works where they are needed, so that they may not be unfruitful." The field of good works is a very broad one. But the foremost good work that Christians are called to do in the world is and remains this: "Preach the gospel to every creature! Proclaim the virtues of him who has called you from darkness to his marvelous light. Zion, you preacher, ascend a high mountain! Jerusalem, you preacher, lift up your voice with power!" That Christians may do this most important work is the official duty of the preacher. And so that the Christians do this work with understanding, willingly and abundantly, the preacher, as has already been said, is ex officio obliged to constantly draw the attention of the Christians under his command to where the Savior needs their earthly good. Thank God, this happens among us. I have noticed at synods how pastors and church delegates sit with open notebooks and carefully note

down where, in the opinion of those gathered, the Savior wants to use his Christians to further his kingdom. But we cannot and will not deny that we pastors and teachers could become even more complete in acquainting our congregations with the needs of the kingdom of God. The pastor has many obstacles to overcome, both with the congregation and with himself. There are otherwise dear Christians in the church who are willing to stand up for the local needs of their local church, even with large gifts, but are inclined to oppose the pastor as soon as he calls for gifts for the preaching of the gospel in other places. This is an extremely dangerous attitude for the Christians concerned and for the whole church. Christians who think and act in this way deny part of their Christian calling and cause God to measure them with the same measure in church work that they use to measure him in preaching the gospel in other places. This is also proven by the inner history of our synod. If anything is certain to us through experience, it is this: the congregations that have prospered best both internally and externally are those that have been most diligent and zealous for so-called "extra-church purposes". But the pastor also has to overcome obstacles within himself. Dr. Walther used to recommend the following to the candidate class in § 49 of his *Pastorale*: "You may only receive a small salary and therefore worry whether the congregation will provide you with what you need. If you are tempted to stop encouraging giving to missions, teaching institutions, etc., remember that there is a divine nemesis. The church will become increasingly unwilling to give you what you need. And that is a righteous judgment from God, because you are neglecting a part of your ministry." These are sharp but completely true words from Dr. Walther. And they do us pastors and teachers good, provided we still have the flesh on us. So let us not neglect, as much as it is up to us, to familiarize our Christians with the needs of the kingdom of God and to encourage them to give willingly and abundantly! That is the lesson for pastors.

2. But it is also the responsibility of every church member to educate himself about where his Savior needs his gifts. When church deputies at synods have heard about a lack of money in this or that treasury, I have repeatedly heard the reproach from their mouths in public meetings: "Why didn't our pastor tell us that?" Well, we have just heard the lesson for the pastors. But I ask the counter-question: "Why didn't you, as a member of the congregation, inform yourself?" As a Christian, you are obliged to keep your own eyes open. Perhaps you don't even keep a church newspaper, for example *Der Lutheraner*, [or the *Lutheran Witness*] which keeps you up to date with what is going on in the kingdom of God and its needs.

It is not just a small, but a very great deficiency, indeed a disgrace, if there are church members who do not even read a church newspaper. They read secular newspapers that report on daily events and market prices. And that is quite right, because they are also citizens in the kingdom of this world. But because they have been given the grace of being citizens in the kingdom of Christ, they should also be interested enough in this kingdom to keep and eagerly read a magazine that gives news from and about Christ's kingdom. I do not know how the *Lutheraner* is distributed in this district. But I ask the brethren who are present here as deputies of the congregations: When you get home, find out whether there are any members in your congregations who do not yet read a church magazine. If you find such brethren, then speak to them in a friendly manner that you want to catch up as soon as possible. There is no greater joy for Christians, as far as news is concerned, than when they hear about the work in the kingdom, which after all is closer to their hearts than all other things in the world.

The question has repeatedly been raised as to whether wealthy and rich Christians should also be encouraged to give particularly generous gifts. This has been denied here and there and a corresponding practice has been introduced. I have known congregations in which all members entitled to vote gave the same contribution, for example to the congregation's budget. This did not mean much, as the contribution was so small that even the less well-off were not burdened by it. And yet this was an injustice against the wealthier. It is a great injustice against the wealthy if they are not expected to give more of their goods to Christ's kingdom than the less well-off. Also, the wealthy themselves are in danger, because of their evil flesh, of speaking of the same contribution and saying: "It is wonderful that with us, as a rule, only small gifts are given. In other churches, individual kingdoms give large gifts. But we give all Christians the same opportunity and let the widow's mite be honored among us." This speech can conceal self-deception and miserliness. Let every man examine himself! The fact is that Scripture contains a special exhortation to the rich to give. We read, for example, 1 Timothy 6:17 ff: "To the rich of this world I charge them not to be proud, nor to hope in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who gives us richly all things to enjoy; that they may do good, be rich in good works, giving gladly, being helpful, storing up treasures for themselves a good foundation for the things to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life." This exhortation can be found at the end of the first letter to Timothy. The apostle Paul had already finished, already said Amen, v. 16.

But by inspiration of the Holy Spirit he begins anew with a special exhortation for the rich. We in the Missouri Synod are also gradually becoming rich. So, by God's grace, let us also diligently read 1 Tim. 6:17-19 and act accordingly. — We have now exhorted ourselves somewhat abundantly and at length to "financial movement". Will the word of exhortation do any good? Certainly! For Isaiah 33:24 is written of the church in the New Testament: "No inhabitant will say, 'I am weak. For the people who dwell within will have forgiveness of sins." We are certain of the forgiveness of our sins through Christ. Therefore we are strong, even financially strong. Let us only beware that we do not make ourselves weak! Let us banish from our midst such talk as: "The rich Catholic Church." According to statistics, Protestants are on average richer in earthly goods than Catholics. In addition, we Lutherans are much, much richer than Catholics in spiritual goods. We are assured of the forgiveness of our sins through the pure Gospel. Thus we are superior to Catholics in two respects. If we do not make ourselves weak, we willingly give more for the Gospel than they are forced to give for the deceit of the papacy. May God grant us this grace! —

This was followed by a discussion about the support fund for old and sick pastors and teachers and their families and surviving dependents. Almost all church communities have their problems with this. Dr. Walther was also very concerned about this matter. He quotes (*Pastorale*, p. 60 [*Pastoral Theology*, p.72-73]) the words of Balduin: "Not only the minister of the Word, but also his family is to be fed, and in such a way that they have enough in sickness and after the death of the husband and father." Walther commented: "Yes, who thinks about that here in America!" In fact, in our country, workers are almost without exception treated quite differently from other workers in the Word and in teaching. A bricklayer, for example, is not paid according to "love", not according to the smallness or size of his family, not according to his momentary needs, but according to the value of his work. It is the same with all other workers. As a rule, their wages are calculated in such a way that, after their labor has been used up, they are provided for in old age. They have been able to save. It should be the same with preachers and teachers. Their salary should not be measured according to what they need at the moment, but according to the work they do, and this work is worth "twofold honor", that is, twofold wages, according to the estimation of Holy Scripture. If this is done, they have money left over for sickness and old age. But in 96 out of 100 cases among us it is probably the case that pastors and teachers live from hand to mouth. When their labor is exhausted, they are indeed destitute. From here

it goes without saying that all churches that have not paid their pastors and teachers according to the value of their work, but only according to their present needs, are guilty before God and man of providing for their former workers in their old age. They are not doing a work of mercy, but of duty.

The congregation also commented on this point: When discussing the support of sick and elderly pastors and teachers and their widows and children, it has often been said in synod meetings that it is first and foremost the duty of relatives to provide for them. Here and there one even finds in the regulations of the support commissions the provision that the responsible commissions should first remind the relatives to care for the elderly pastors and teachers, and that only then should the congregations or the synod begin to provide for them if the relatives are unable or unwilling to do their "duty". This is certainly wrong. At best, provision on the part of the relatives could be claimed in the few cases in which the workers in the Word and in teaching were rewarded according to their work, that is, considered worthy of "twofold honor", and were thus able, like other workers, to communicate to their relatives. In this case, they could expect their relatives to repay them in kind. In the many cases, however, in which the congregations only provided their workers with food and clothing, they should not hand these workers over to their relatives after they have used up their strength. This is neither right before God nor before men. Relatives may, and in some cases will, provide for them. But they should not be required to do so.

Thesis III. ^

The "lay movement" in the Christian walk in general.

Although Christians are primarily to build Christ's kingdom through the Christian proclamation of the Word, it is nevertheless divine order that all Christians should also work diligently for the Christian church at all times through their Christian walk in all circumstances of life.

A conference of sectarian preachers, recently assembled in St. Louis, decided with all votes except one to advertise the activities of their churches in the political newspapers. What is to be made of this? This advertisement is not to be rejected outright if it is done in the right way. Our traveling preachers make use of secular newspapers in many places to advertise the time and place of public services. This "advertising" is within the realm of Christian freedom and wisdom.

But there is an advertisement of the Christian Church that is more important and directly commanded in God's Word, that is, divine order. If Christians omit this "display", they are acting contrary to God's commandment and order, sinning grievously and causing themselves and the Church terrible harm. This is the display of the Christian church through the good walk of Christians, of which it says in Titus 3:14: "Let ours learn that they may be found in a state of good works", and 1 Peter 2:12: "Lead a good walk among the Gentiles." Let us now emphasize individual points.

Christians must prove their faith through good works that can be seen by people. A Christian who walks disorderly and thereby makes his Christianity suspect must not say: "Do not judge me by my works, but by the faith I have in my heart. If you could only see into my heart, you would realize how sincere and strong my faith is." The Christian who speaks in this way should be told: "We cannot and will not look into your heart. Only God can do that. God alone is the heart's revealer. It is virtually forbidden for people to want to look into the heart. But it is God's will and order that you show people your faith through good works." It is not up to the Christian whether he wants to prove his faith with good works or not. In this sense, the letter of James (2:18) states: "Show me your faith with your works", literally translated: from your works. Abraham was justified by his works, namely before men. Scripture teaches two things: 1. we are justified by faith alone without works; 2. we are justified by works alone. We are justified before God by faith alone, Rom. 3:28; Gal. 2:16. Woe to the man who also wants to be justified before God by works. The Scripture says of such a person Gal 3:10: "Those who walk in the works of the law are under the curse." But before men who cannot see into the heart, we are only justified by works, Luke 7:44-47.

Let us therefore note that we cannot exempt any church member from proving their faith through their works. If a member of the church points out to us the faith he has in his heart, we say to him: "Fine, we cannot see what is in your heart, but you must prove your faith to the church by your works. If your works speak against you, then we cannot and should not consider you a Christian. We Christians are commanded by God to judge you by your works." Of course, the works of Christians are and remain a fragile thing. "The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak." "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." But the Holy Spirit gives every Christian so many works that he can prove his faith to his brethren by his works. Even

the thief on the cross proved his faith with his works, although he did not live long after his conversion. He punished the other evildoer, called upon Christ and confessed him as his Savior. When we confess our sin, including our infirmities and shortcomings, ask for forgiveness and promise correction, these works are proof of faith before men. Sin tempts us, it makes us sluggish, but it does not rule us. St. Paul says of Christians in Romans 6:14: "Sin shall not have dominion over you, because you are not under law but under grace." The proof of faith by works is therefore divine order, Titus 3:14: "Let ours learn to be found in a state of good works where they are needed." 1 Peter 2:12: "Lead a good walk among the Gentiles." V. 15: "This is the will of God, that you should fill up the ignorance of foolish men with goodness." Titus (Tit. 2:1 ff.) is to urge all ages and classes: old men and old women, young men and young women, masters and servants, to a godly walk "so that they may adorn the teaching of their God, our Savior, in all things".

Scripture goes even further with regard to the "lay movement" in its walk. God not only wants us to show good works in ourselves for the recommendation of the Church, but we are to pursue good works with the greatest seriousness and zeal. "No easy-going" in this respect! Scripture punishes Christians who play around with regard to the Christian walk. Rather, they are to be diligent, literally translated: zealous, zealots, in good works, Titus 2:14; they are to "always pursue what is good, both among themselves and toward everyone," 1 Thessalonians 5:15. This is related to how Christians are to treat the old Adam, the sinful flesh that still clings to them. They are to kill the members that are on earth, Col. 3:5, 6; crucify the flesh, Gal. 5:24; they are to die to sin in order to live to God, Rom. 6:11. The most powerful word in relation to the divine order of the ruthless killing of the flesh was probably spoken by the Savior when He used the powerful words of cutting off hands and feet and plucking out eyes in Mark 9:43-47.

Christians owe this to themselves, their brethren and the world.

a. To themselves. Christians fall from the faith if they are not diligent in good works. Good works do not sustain faith. Faith is produced and maintained solely by the work of the Holy Spirit in the gospel. "By the power of God you will be saved for salvation through faith", 1 Peter 1:5, but evil works destroy faith, and the omission of good works puts faith in danger. Through faith, the Holy Spirit has entered our hearts and continually warns us

from within: "You must serve your God and walk carefully. With regard to evil he says: You must not do that, and with regard to good he admonishes: You should do that. If we do not listen to the Holy Spirit, ignore his warning against evil works and disregard his admonition to do good works, then the Holy Spirit is grieved and departs from our hearts. It is therefore a very dangerous thing when Christians lack holy earnestness in their walk.

And there is another point to consider as to why we Christians owe it to ourselves to be diligent in good works. According to God's will, we Christians should have an outward divine testimony in our good works that we are God's children. We can distinguish a double testimony of the Holy Spirit for our Christian status: 1. the inner testimony. We have the inner witness in that the Holy Spirit has worked faith in our hearts in our dear Savior or the Gospel. The faith in our hearts is the affirmation of the gospel of God wrought in our hearts by the Holy Spirit. "God's testimony is that which he has begotten of his Son. Whoever believes in the Son of God has such a testimony with him," that is, in himself, 1 John 5:9-10. 2 The outward testimony. We have the outward witness of the Holy Spirit in that the Holy Spirit produces tangible fruits of faith and moves us to good works. By our good works we then realize that we are God's children. When I realize that I enjoy listening to God's Word, I have a testimony issued by the Holy Spirit: you are a child of God. For only the children of God have love for God's Word, John 8:47. We also have a testimony of the Holy Spirit in our love for the brethren, for the Scripture says: "We know that we have come from death into life, because we love the brethren," 1 John 3:14. The fact that we all so often doubt our state of grace is also due to the fact that we are so little concerned with our works. Whoever is constantly eyeing the world, is stingy, gives nothing for the kingdom of God, his works tell him: You are actually a hopeless person.

A wonderful statement by Luther about the fact that we should not only prove our faith to the world with our works, but also to ourselves, may find a place here. Luther writes: "Set the works so that they are a certain sign and pressed like a seal on a letter, so that I may be sure that faith is right. Cause: If I feel in my heart that the work flows from love, then I am sure that my faith is righteous. If I forgive, forgiveness makes me certain that my faith is righteous, and assures and proves my faith that God has forgiven me and forgives me daily; but if I do not forgive, I may conclude that I lack faith. So it was with Abraham; the work made his faith known to him.

God knew that he believed, but he also had to know it and prove his faith. Therefore the works are henceforth only the free fruits and evidence of such faith. For what good would it do me if I already had a strong faith if I did not know it? As if I had a treasure chest full of florins and did not know it, it would be of no use to me; but if someone revealed it to me, he would do me as much service as if he had given it to me. So even if I have faith and do not know it, it is of no use to me. Therefore it must break forth and be made known to me through the works that follow; these then are signs and seals that faith is there. This is also what St. Peter means when he says in 2 Peter 1:10-11 about the works of love and the virtues of faith: 'Therefore, brethren, make every effort to make your calling and election sure, for if you do these things you will not fall, and so the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be richly supplied to you. He does not say, 'Do good works that you may be called, but that you may make your calling sure. (St. L. XI, 1277 f.)

This genuinely biblical teaching has also been incorporated into our Lutheran Confessions. It says in the Apology, (Latin text) [Art. III; *Triglotta*, p. 199]: "Christ often attaches the promise of forgiveness of sins to good works; not that he intended good works to be a propitiation, for they follow reconciliation, but for two causes. One cause is because they must necessarily follow as good fruits. He therefore warns us that repentance is hypocrisy and conceited if it is not followed by good fruits. The other reason is that we need to have outward signs of such a great promise, because the fearful conscience needs multiple consolations. Therefore, just as Baptism and the Lord's Supper are signs that continually remind, lift up, and assure the fearful spirit that it may believe all the more firmly in the forgiveness of sins, so also the same promise is written and painted on good works, that these works may remind us to believe all the more firmly."

b. We also owe our brethren a devout Christian walk. Let us be mindful of our brethren in our walk! Oh, how earnestly the apostle speaks on this point! Every time we give offense to a brother through evil conduct, so that he is in danger of falling, we are busy destroying a work of the Holy Spirit, corrupting the temple of God which God has built up in the hearts of the brethren through faith. And whoever corrupts the temple of God, God will corrupt him, says the Apostle 1 Cor. 3:17. What the Savior says about giving offense to the children is particularly striking. "But whosoever shall offend one of the least of these that believe on me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea," Matthew 18:6.

On the other hand, it is God's will that we so conduct ourselves in word and deed that it may be for the edification of all brethren, great and small, Ephesians 4:29.

c. But we also owe the world a pious walk. The world has no judgment of the gospel. The gospel is a hidden mystery to the world. But the world has a judgment on the walk of Christians. The world still knows to some extent how a person should walk according to the law of God. It knows that a person should honor his parents, not harm his neighbor in body, life, property or honor and should be faithful, reliable and diligent in all activities. In all these works, Christians should walk in such a way that their good conduct will attract attention and cause the world to question the source of this conduct. "This alienates them, that you do not walk with them in the same desolate and disorderly way", 1 Peter 4:4. Through the conduct of Christian women, those who do not yet believe the word of the gospel are to be won, 1 Pet. 3:1 ff. Luther: "From this it is easy to see that Christ does not teach here to become pious and righteous by works, but exhorts those who are already pious and righteous to be merciful like their heavenly Father, etc., so that the Gentiles may be improved thereby, and thus attract the unbelievers with their merciful and innocent life, that they may be converted and improved not only by their preaching, but also by their good walk." (St. L. XI, 1288.) The good conduct of Christians towards the world has been compared to the ringing of bells. The ringing of bells in our churches does not convert people, but rather calls them to church to hear the Word of God. The bells thus become the cause that people hear God's Word and come to faith through the Word. It is the same with the walk of Christians. No one is converted by the way Christians walk. But by the fact that Christians shine as lights in this world with their walk, so that the world must say: They walk quite differently from us — by this the world becomes aware of the Christian church, is drawn to the Word, and the Word can now exercise its saving power. In this way the walk of Christians should be in the service of the Church of God. This is divine order.

That is why the admonition now applies to us all: Let us watch how we walk! Let us walk in such a way that we do not harm the Christian Church through our walk, but on the contrary, that our walk is an "advertisement" of the Christian Church, printed in large letters and legible from afar. Yes, God grant us grace that we may keep to God's order in our diligent and faithful preaching of the Word, in our willing and abundant giving for the Gospel and in our careful Christian walk in general!

Doctrinal Proceedings.

(Speaker: Dr. F. Pieper.)

The Holy Scriptures. ^

To the Christian doctrine, which Luther defended and confessed before the whole world and church four hundred years ago at Worms, belongs primarily the truth that the Holy Scriptures are the only source and guide of Christian doctrine, because the Holy Scriptures are24 not the word of man, but the Word of our great God and Savior, and God wants to teach all men through this Word and govern their hearts and consciences. We are all familiar with the answer Luther gave to the papal spokesman when he asked him at Worms to finally give a short and clear answer as to whether or not he wanted to recant some or all of his doctrine. Luther's answer was: "Unless I am overcome by the testimony of Scripture or by clear arguments — for I believe neither the Pope nor the Councils alone, since it is clear that they have often erred and contradicted themselves — I am

overcome by the passages of Holy Scripture I have quoted, and my conscience is captive to God's Word. I cannot and will not recant, because it is unsafe and dangerous to act contrary to conscience." It is clear from these words that Luther recognized no other authority in the Christian Church and for the conscience of every individual Christian than Holy Scripture. He rejects any other authority in the Christian Church, be it pope or church assembly. This was Luther's position, and he held fast to it. Luther did not leave immediately after his public appearance on April 17 and 18, but stayed in Worms for another seven days, until April 26. And in the meantime, a number of attempts were made in several private meetings, including the use of flattery, to force Luther away from his fine position on the Holy Scriptures. These meetings were held in the house of the Archbishop of Treves. He was one of the few papists with whom Luther had a certain amount of trust. Luther's words: "I cannot help it, my conscience is captive to God's Word" had made a powerful impression on the entire assembly in Worms. And so the Archbishop of Treves and other Roman theologians made an attempt to see if they could dissuade Luther from his firm standpoint. Four more meetings were held, on April 24 and 25, in the mornings and afternoons. In the first meeting, Luther was asked to recognize the authority of the councils, especially the Council of Constance. Luther had written many good writings that were useful for Christians to read, and these writings would not be read if he rejected the authority of the councils. Luther replied that the Councils could not be relied upon, as the Council of Constance had demonstrated by its unjust condemnation of John Hus; therefore he could not recognize the Councils as authorities. He stuck to *sola Scriptura*. Scripture alone must teach Christianity and govern hearts and consciences.

The organizers of the meeting withdrew for a consultation and then came forward with the suggestion that Luther should let the emperor and the empire judge his doctrine. Luther replied that he was heartily willing to do so, on condition that the emperor and the empire would judge on the basis of Scripture. On the following day, Thursday, April 25, another attempt was made to persuade Luther to submit to the emperor and the empire without reservation. They promised to ensure that Luther's writings would only be presented to unobjectionable and just judges. Luther replied that in matters of Christian doctrine one could not and should not rely on men at all, not even on so-called impartial men, but only on God's Word. He cited Jer. 17:5: "Cursed is the man who relies on men!"

Finally, it was suggested that Luther should at least leave the decision on his doctrine to a future council. But here too Luther added the condition that he could only submit to the decision of a future council if the decision was proven by the testimony of Holy Scripture. They now refrained from dissuading Luther from the *sola Scriptura* . The following day, on April 26, at 10 o'clock in the morning, Luther departed from Worms. From Friedberg, north of Worms, he sent a letter to the emperor and the imperial estates on April 28, in which he thanked them for the hearing he had been granted and the safe conduct, and pledged himself to all obedience in worldly matters, but at the same time repeated that in matters of Christian doctrine his conscience was bound by God's Word alone.

We will now hardly find ourselves in the position of being placed before the emperor and the empire as Luther was four hundred years ago in Worms. But according to God's will, we are to take the same position with regard to Holy Scripture. And we need the same position if, by God's grace, we want to achieve the end of our faith, the salvation of our souls. By God's grace we also take this position. But in doing so, we have virtually the entire world, the host of hell, and most of contemporary external Christianity as our enemies. We are not left in peace. With the use of mockery and derision, with the use of obviously godless and pious-sounding speeches, also with the occasional use of flattery, that there is much good in our writings, that people like to read them, etc., they try to push us away from the Holy Scriptures as the only basis of our Christian faith. In addition, our own sinful flesh is very reluctant to recognize and accept the Holy Scriptures as God's own Word. But we must triumph over the devil, the world and the flesh. God's Word is the only light in the darkness of this world when it comes to the question: What must I do to be saved? It is the only bridge that connects us with heaven in this life and carries us through death into life.

Well, let us strengthen ourselves for this battle and victory through a doctrinal discussion of the Holy Scriptures, first by allowing the Scriptures themselves to testify to us what they are, namely God's own Word by inspiration, and then by recognizing and rejecting the objections raised against them as null and void. The following theses about Holy Scripture may serve as a basis for discussion:

I. The Holy Scripture, unlike all other books in the world, is God’s own word.

II. The Holy Scriptures are God's Word by inspiration, that is, by the fact that God has inspired the Scriptures to the sacred writers.

III. The objections raised against this are null and void.

I.

The Holy Scripture, unlike all other books in the world, is God's own Word.

Someone might ask: Is there anyone at all who wants to be a Christian and yet does not believe that Holy Scripture is God's Word? To this we must reply: There was, however, a time when this truth was hardly contested by anyone in the Christian church. Even if in the time that we usually call the time of the Church Fathers, Christian doctrine was no longer taught publicly as purely as it was in the Apostolic Church, the so-called Church Fathers of the first centuries nevertheless confessed in their writings the indisputable divinity of Holy Scripture. Furthermore, in the time of the Christian Church, which we call the Middle Ages, the papist teachers falsified Christian doctrine from the ground up. They replaced the Gospel of Grace with the pagan doctrine of works, and they actually replaced Holy Scripture with the decrees of the pope and the councils. But in doing so they left unchallenged, even if only outwardly, the proposition that Holy Scripture is the Word of God. And as far as the time of the Reformation was concerned, in addition to the truth that man obtains forgiveness of sins through faith in Christ without the works of the law, Luther again placed the truth brightly on the lampstand that the Holy Scriptures alone should constitute articles of faith, on the grounds that the Scriptures alone are God's own and infallible word. This truth remained fairly unchallenged for over two hundred years in Lutheran and also mostly in so-called Protestant Christianity. This changed in the third century after the Reformation. It became even worse in the fourth century.

At present, in so-called Protestant Christianity, the doctrine that Holy Scripture is God's Word and therefore infallible truth has been abandoned by most public teachers who have the great reputation. Holy Scripture is not supposed to be God's Word itself. It is not supposed to be the book in which God himself speaks to us, but only a kind of church record of the first Christian churches, in which people tell us how they understood the teaching of Christ. These people may have been enlightened by the Holy Spirit working in the church, but human opinions and errors are not excluded. Scripture is called "divine-human" in the sense that human error is also found in Scripture alongside divine truth. [Cp. with the LC–MS's and Dr. Samuel Nafzger's *Confessing the Gospel*, and others.] It is therefore the task of the Church, especially of learned theologians, to distinguish between truth and error. With this, however, the sure ground of the apostles and prophets is abandoned and everything is put in doubt.

We Missourians and our fellow believers and confessors are regarded in wide circles as "backward" people who have lagged behind in the necessary development. But by God's grace we are not deceived. We hold fast to the fact that the Holy Scriptures are God's own Word, in contrast to all other writings that exist in the world. When we open the Scriptures, we know that God is speaking to us. When the Scriptures are read aloud, the congregation rises up, because God is speaking to it. There are, of course, many writings in the world that contain God's Word. Since the time of the apostles, hundreds of thousands of writings have been written that contain God's word in such a way that God's word is recorded in them from the Scriptures. Augustine's writings, written in the fifth century, and Anselm's writings, written in the Middle Ages, contain God's Word more or less purely. Luther's, Gerhard's, Walther's writings contain God's Word. And such writings are also useful to read. We should also look at the Word of God contained in such writings and take it to heart as if God himself spoke it to us. But what is really God's Word in these writings has come into them from the Holy Scriptures. Many people have also been converted to Christ through reading such writings. But these writings have only had this blessed effect to the extent that they have absorbed the word of Holy Scripture. This is not a human thought, but the clear teaching of Christ when he says in John 17:20 in the high priestly prayer that all Christians will "believe in me through their" — the apostles' — "word until the last day". But we have the apostles' word in the writings of the apostles, which we now call Holy Scripture. That is why Luther rightly says in his well-known instructions for theological study: "First of all, you should know that Holy Scripture is such a book that makes foolish the wisdom of all other books, because none of them teaches about eternal life except this one alone." If, thank God, other books also teach about eternal life, namely the right way to eternal life, then this is taken from the Holy Scriptures. We have books by Greek philosophers. But they do not contain God's Word and do not teach anything about eternal life, because the writers of these books were not familiar with the Holy Scriptures. Socrates is considered the wisest of all Greeks. When he was about to die — because he drank the cup of poison — he did not express the confidence that he had a merciful God through faith in Christ, but said: "Do not forget to sacrifice a cock to Asclepius!"

Thus we also maintain with Luther that Holy Scripture is a book of a unique nature, namely, in contrast to all books, God's book, that is, God's own Word. Among all other books that exist, Holy Scripture forms a class

of its own, "*forming a class by itself*". [1]) [1) Davis, *Bible Dictionary, sub* "Bible."] If, in arranging the books in a library, we wanted to express the nature of the Bible externally, we could place the Bible on a book shelf that stands by itself or is placed in the center of the library. In short, our thesis is that Holy Scripture, unlike all other books in the world, is God's own Word.

How do we know this? Just as we take all other teachings from Scripture, so also the teaching about Scripture itself. So we ask: What does Scripture say about itself? And the answer is: Scripture says of itself that it is the Word of God, and it does so in several ways.

1. The words of the Old Testament Scriptures are quoted in the New Testament as God's words. Matthew 1:23 quotes from the prophet Isaiah, namely from Isaiah 7:14, the words: "Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son." But of these words it is said in v. 22 that the Lord spoke them through the prophet. Matt. 2:15 quotes the words from Hos. 11:1 : "Out of Egypt have I called my son." With regard to these words it is immediately testified that the Lord spoke them through the prophet. Acts 4:25 is quoted from the 2nd Psalm: "Why do the nations rebel, and the peoples take in vain?" But it is also said of these words that God spoke them through the mouth of his servant David. Acts 28:26 the words of Isaiah 6:9-10 are held up to the Jews in Rome: "Go to this people and say, 'With your ears you will hear and not understand, and with your eyes you will see and not recognize,' etc. And to these words is added the judgment that the Holy Spirit spoke them well (that is, correctly) through the prophet Isaiah to the fathers of Israel, v. 25. Heb. 3:7 says of a quotation from the 95th Psalm: "As the Holy Spirit says: Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts!" Romans 3:2 refers to the entire Holy Scripture of the Old Testament, which was entrusted to the Jewish church: "what God has spoken" (*ta logia ton Theou*, God's sayings, God's words). And because the whole Scripture of the Old Testament is God's own Word, Christ says of this Scripture in John 10:35 that it cannot be broken in a single word.

Even more. There are a number of scriptural passages that are sometimes overlooked when people talk about Scripture being God's Word. But they are tremendous proof of the divinity of Scripture. These are the passages of Scripture that say that all events in the world must be or happen according to the Word of Scripture. Everything that has happened and will happen, from

the beginning to the end of the world, must and will happen as it is written. Thus Matthew 1:22, as we have already heard, says of the birth of Christ from the Virgin Mary that it happened "so that the Scriptures might be fulfilled". John 17:12 speaks of Judas' apostasy and end and adds: "that" (*hina*, so that) "the Scriptures might be fulfilled". When Peter wants to save Christ from being taken with the sword in the garden, Christ also rebukes him with the words: "How will the Scriptures be fulfilled? It must be so." And of all that happened to Christ, especially of His suffering and subsequent glory, Christ Himself says in Luke 24:44 ff: "All things must be fulfilled that are written of Me in the Law of Moses, in the Prophets and in the Psalms," etc. If all that is written in Scripture must come to pass, then Scripture must not be the word of man, but the word of Him who has everything in heaven and on earth in His hand, who directs all events, without whom nothing can happen in heaven and on earth, who is omnipotent and omniscient, in short, the great, majestic God Himself.

2. This is said first of all of the Scriptures of the Old Testament. But that the writings of the apostles of the New Testament are of the same nature, namely also God's own Word, is taught in 1 Pet. 1:10-12, where it is first said of the Old Testament prophets that they prophesied of the future grace of the New Testament through the Spirit of Christ who was in them, but then it is added with regard to the New Testament apostles: "Which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven." Here it is clearly taught that, as the word of the prophets of the Old Testament, so also the word of the apostles of the New Testament is the word of the Holy Ghost. The objection that only the oral word, not the writings of the apostles, is spoken of here does not apply, because the apostles expressly say that they wrote the same things that they proclaimed orally. Thus the apostle John writes in 1 John 1:3-4: "What we have seen and heard we declare to you … and these things we write to you, that your joy may be full." In the same way, the apostle Paul exhorts the Thessalonians to make no distinction between what the apostle preached to them orally and what he wrote to them, saying: "Stand therefore, brethren, and hold fast the doctrines which ye have been taught, whether by our word, or by epistles", 2 Thess. 2:15. And what is more, the apostles insist very firmly on *sola Scriptura*, on the written word. The apostle Paul explicitly refers the Christian churches of his time to his letters and demands that the churches should accept the letters he has written as God's Word and commandment. There were people in the church at Corinth who

boasted that they were also prophets and had the Holy Spirit, and therefore placed their word alongside and above Paul's word. The apostle points out to them that all those who boasted of being prophets and spiritual must prove themselves to be true prophets and truly spiritual people by recognizing the apostle's written word as God's Word and submitting to it. He writes in 1 Cor. 14:37: "If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge the things that I write unto you: for they are the commandments of the Lord." Even at the time of the apostles it happened that people referred to oral tradition, that is, to words that were supposedly spoken by the apostles and to letters that supposedly came from the apostles. Paul therefore writes in 2 Thess. 2:2 to the Christians in Thessalonica that they should not allow themselves to be shaken and frightened "neither by spirit nor by word nor by letter, as having been sent by us". So that the Christian congregations could distinguish genuine apostolic writings from those that had been foisted on them, Paul refers to his handwriting in 2 Thess. 3:17: "The salutation of Paul with mine own hand, which is the token in every epistle: so I write." So abundantly is it attested in Scripture that, as the Scriptures of the Old Testament, so also the Scriptures of the New Testament are the Word of God.

Thus Luther and the old Lutheran teachers. Luther: "Thou shalt therefore deal with the Scriptures, that thou mayest think as God himself speaketh." (St. L. III, 21) Gerhard: "There is no difference between the Word of God and Holy Scripture." (*L. de Scriptura Sacra*, § 7.) There is only a difference in expression, whether we say: "Scripture says" or: "God says." In substance it is one and the same.

The truth that Holy Scripture is God's Word easily fades into the background, because Holy Scripture speaks to us in such simple, human words and also deals with the things of human life, e.g. household, agriculture, animal husbandry, clothing and food, etc.. The Holy Scriptures are therefore concerned with how Christ was at the time when he walked on earth. Because Christ was found to be like a man in appearance, the Jewish public regarded him as a mere man like John the Baptist, Elijah, Jeremiah or one of the prophets, Matt. 16:14. The same applies to the Holy Scriptures. Because it is written in simple-minded, human language, it is not considered to be the Word of God, but is placed in the same class as human books and criticized. May never a Lutheran pastor in the pulpit or a teacher in the school criticize the Scriptures! May God also protect us especially from professors who criticize God's Word because the Scriptures have such a simple outward appearance! Luther says in his preface to the Old Testament (St. L. XIV, 3 f.): "I beg and faithfully warn

every pious Christian not to be offended at the simple-minded speech and history that he will often encounter, but do not doubt how lowly it can always be regarded, that it is mere words, works, judgments and history to the high divine majesty, power and wisdom. For this is the Scripture that makes fools of all the wise and clever, and is open only to the small and foolish, as Christ says in Matthew 11:25. Therefore, let your arrogance and your feelings go, and think of this Scripture as the highest and noblest sanctuary, as the richest treasure trove, which can never be sufficiently filled, so that you may find the divine wisdom which God presents here so foolishly and simply that he may subdue all arrogance."

Is the Scripture God's word to us personally?

We conclude this section with a self-examination as to whether we, too, take the Holy Scriptures seriously as God's Word and the only source and guideline of Christian doctrine. Let us ask ourselves:

1. Do we consider every time we open our Bible that it is a book in which not a man, but the great God Himself, the Creator of heaven and earth, and our Savior, speaks to us? And yet this is indeed the case. Walther used to say: "When I have my Bible under my arm, I feel extremely rich, because God speaks to me in this Bible." When we use the Bible in this way, we are using it in accordance with the truth that the Bible is God's own Word. God is an invisible God to us in this life; no one has ever seen God. Of course, we know that God is and works everywhere. We see from every blade of grass: this is God's work. But the work of creation does not open God's heart to us as it does to us sinners. It is not written on the mountains or in the valleys, on the stars or in the depths of the earth, that God will not condemn us but take us to heaven for Christ's sake; God only tells us this in his Word. There he speaks to us as a man speaks to man. We cannot come closer to God for our salvation in this life than in His Word. We will not allow ourselves to be misled by the fact that some say: Christ has appeared to me. Luther repeatedly says that he does not want Christ to communicate with him through apparitions, because there is a possibility that, with God's permission, the devil could disguise himself as an angel of light. But he, Luther, was certain that Christ was with him, not silently, but speaking in his revealed Word. (St. L. 1, 1118 ff.) So it is. Christ has pointed us to His Word: "If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.", John 8:31-32. Let us remember this when we open our Bible or hear the words of the Bible,

so that we may worship in reverence of God in His Word and say: "Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth!"

2. Do we read the Scriptures diligently? That is how it should be. Holy Scripture is a letter from God to us humans. Luther says repeatedly: Letters of lords and princes should be read two or three times, for they are written thoughtfully. But the Scriptures, our God's letter, should be read incessantly, a hundred and a thousand times. (St. L. I, 1055; XXII, 544. 1069.) Now there is hardly a house in our synod in which a Bible is not to be found. Yes, there are probably several copies of the Bible in almost every house. But in order to test ourselves as to whether we take the Holy Scriptures seriously as the Word of God, we should ask ourselves the question: Is the Bible the most read or the least read book in our home? If we investigate, we will find that we have sinned greatly in this respect. And this is because we forget that the Bible is God's own Word, God's letter, written to every human being. If we want to establish diligent Bible reading in our churches, we must point this out again and again: Remember, dear Christian, what you have in your Bible! It is God's letter, also addressed to you personally. In it you are told: God is merciful to you; you, sinner, are reconciled with God through Christ's death; God has accepted you for the sake of Christ's blood.

3. Do we diligently listen to God's Word when it is preached in public? God not only wants His Word to be read, but he has also ordained that His Word be proclaimed in public preaching by those who are competent and called to do so. What follows from this? All who have feet to walk and ears to hear should go to church for public preaching, unless God himself tells us through the circumstances at hand: You are not going to church today. Only ministries of love, such as caring for the sick, should prevent us from doing so. It is a contempt for the Holy Scriptures as the Word of God if we become sluggish and lazy in attending public services.

4. Do we allow God's Word to dwell richly among us, even in our conversation and interaction with the brethren? Christians can and should also talk to one another about the things that belong to their worldly and civil profession. They will also discuss contemporary events. The world is wrong in its assessment of current events. Christians need not err with the world. They can and should put all these things in the light of the Word of God. God has written the letter of His Word to them for this purpose. That is why Christians talk among themselves above all about God's Word and church matters. This was probably better in our synod in the past than it is now. [Pieper says a falling away was beginning in 1921.] We pastors should always exhort our congregations

not to forget to let the word of Christ dwell abundantly among them in their social gatherings.

5. Are we diligent to commit as many words of Scripture as possible to our memory, so that God's Word may be present to us as a lamp to our feet and a light to our path, even when we do not have our Bible with us? Care should be taken at home and at school to memorize such a selection of stories and Bible verses which express the main points of Christian doctrine and life.

6. Do we show diligence and zeal in the distribution of the Bible? The Bible should be read. "Search the Scriptures!" Let us not forget: when we spread the Bible, we also bring into the hands of unbelievers the book in which God speaks to them. But the Holy Spirit is connected with God's speech in the Scriptures, both with the law and with the gospel. Through the law, the Holy Spirit works knowledge of sin; through the gospel, faith in Christ. So, *give the Bible a chance*! We do this by spreading the Bible. Many unbelievers have been converted to Christ by reading the Bible. [Contrary to many in the LC-MS!] All Christians, not just pastors, should therefore always have Bibles and Testaments in their homes so that they can hand them out occasionally. It is fitting that we believe that the Bible is God's own book, written to each and every person.

7. Are we diligent in the work of training teachers and preachers who make it their life's work to teach God's Word? God also wants His Word proclaimed in the public preaching ministry, as we have already heard. But we must train the preachers. Christ himself taught his disciples for three years. The apostles also had a kind of seminary. The apostle Paul wrote to Timothy: "Hold fast the example of the words of salvation which you have heard from me." 2 Tim. 1:13; and Timothy should look around the churches for such people "who are able to teach others also", 2 Tim. 2:2. We must do the same. It should be our constant concern that people who teach the Scriptures publicly are also trained for this ministry. [A hot topic in today's LC-MS.] A synod that neglects its teaching institutions proves that it does not believe from the heart that Scripture is God's own Word.

II.

The Holy Scriptures are God's Word by inspiration, that is, by the fact that God gave or inspired the Scriptures to the sacred writers.

The Holy Scriptures not only tell us the fact that they are God's Word, but also teach very clearly and distinctly where

this comes from, namely, that the Holy Scriptures were breathed or inspired by God into the men through whom they were written. It is said in 2 Tim. 3:16 of the Holy Scriptures: "All scripture is given by inspiration of God" and in 2 Pet. 1:21 of the writers of the Holy Scriptures: "holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." This divine act of inspiration is the reason why Holy Scripture, although written by men and in human language, is not the word of man but the Word of God. The following is contained in the above-mentioned scriptural statements about inspiration:

1. The inspiration of Scripture is the inspiration of the words of Holy Scripture, in theological terms: *verbal inspiration*, *plenary inspiration*. It is quite curious how now and then even well-meaning people who want to stand up for the divinity of Scripture nevertheless express doubts about the inspiration of words or verbal inspiration. In Germany there are a number of pastors who, in the face of unbelief, want to advocate the divinity of Scripture, including the inspiration of Scripture, but strangely enough reject the inspiration of the words of Scripture. They want to admit that the persons who wrote the Scriptures were inspired (personal inspiration), but the inspiration should not extend to the words used by the sacred writers. It will also be admitted that the things about which they wrote were presented to the sacred writers (real inspiration), but inspiration should not extend to the words with which the things are described. But these are both foolish and unscriptural thoughts. As certainly as 2 Tim. 3:16 says of Scripture "inspired by God", and Scripture, as everyone admits, does not consist of "persons" or "things" but of words, so certainly the inspiration of Scripture is word or verbal inspiration. The same is clear from 2 Peter 1:21: "The holy men of God have spoken, moved by the Holy Spirit." From this passage it is clear that the holy men of God, driven by the Holy Spirit, did not merely think or contemplate, but that they spoke, that is, produced words. That we are speaking here of the written words of Holy Scripture, and not merely of the spoken word, is expressly stated in the preceding verse (v. 20), where the words produced by the holy men of God are more specifically described as "prophecy in the Scriptures". And when we look at the use that Christ and the apostles made of the Scriptures, we see that they insist precisely on the words of Scripture. When Christ says of the Scriptures that they cannot be broken (John 10:35), he is referring precisely to the words of Scripture. For he bases his argument against the Jews, that he does not

commit blasphemy when he calls himself "Son of God", on the fact that in the 82nd Psalm the word "gods" is even used of mere men, of the judges of the earth. We see from the story of the temptation of Christ that in Scripture it is precisely the words that matter, and that every dispute is decided by words. By saying "It is written" three times, Christ confronts the devil with the words of Scripture and wins the victory. The Savior says: "It is written: 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God'", Matt. 4:4. "Again it is also written: 'You shall not tempt your Lord God'", v. 7. "It is written: 'You shall worship your Lord God and serve him only'", v. 10. That in divine revelation to mankind it is precisely the words that matter, and faith must adhere to them, is something Christ also says in John 8:31-32: “If you abide in my teaching [that is, in my word], then you are truly my disciples and will know the truth.” So much does everything depend on the words that the apostle Paul says of all teachers who do not abide in Christ's words that they are darkened and know nothing, 1 Tim. 6:3 ff. In short, if we did not hold that the inspiration of Scripture is word inspiration or verbal inspiration, so that the words of Scripture are God's words, Scripture would be of no use to us, because we would always have to remain in doubt as to whether the human writers had also found the right words in the high divine things. But now that the Scriptures — that is, the words of which the Scriptures are composed — are inspired by God, our faith has a foundation on which it can rest securely, because it is firmer than heaven and earth. That is why we dare not depart from any part of God's written word. Luther calls those reckless despisers of Scripture who ignore even one clear passage as if it did not exist, and adds for his own person: "So it is for me that every Bible-passage makes the world too narrow for me." (St. L. XX, 788) In short, Holy Scripture teaches nothing but verbal inspiration.

2. The inspiration of Scripture does not consist in a mere guidance of the sacred writers (*assistentia, assistance, direction*) and preservation of them from error, but in the divine presentation or giving of the words of which Scripture consists. 2 Tim. 3:16 says of Scripture not merely: "All Scripture is directed or guided by God", but: "All Scripture is inspired by God." Guided or directed by God and inspired by God are quite different concepts. Within the Lutheran Church of the seventeenth century, the Helmstedt theologian Georg Calixt wanted to assume a mere divine

guidance and protection from error with regard to such things in Scripture that were already known to the sacred writers beforehand and were of lesser importance in general. [2] To some, this seems harmless at first glance. But Calixt's opinion was rightly rejected by the old Lutheran theologians as contrary to Scripture, because it made a change in the scriptural statement 2 Tim. 3:16, namely, for the statement "inspired by God" another statement was substituted, different in content: "directed or guided by God". Furthermore, it was rightly pointed out by our old theologians that if "guidance" were substituted for "inspiration", the Scripture would at best be the flawless word of man, but not God's Word itself. Scripture is the majestic Word of God itself only through inspiration. [3]

In the Church of God, only "from the mouth of God" should be spoken. The prophet Jeremiah warns the children of Israel: "Do not listen to the words of the prophets who prophesy to you. They deceive you, for they speak from their hearts and not from the mouth of the Lord", Jer. 23:16. Let us note the difference between church and state: in the state, people are allowed, indeed commanded, to speak from reason; civil society is to be instructed from reason about good and evil. But in the church, a completely different order prevails. The church is God's house, God's temple, and in this house, as Luther often says, only the word of the great master of the house should resound. If, for example, a member of the congregation comes to the pastor and says: "Pastor, I cannot accept what you have said", the pastor must be able to say and prove it: I have spoken from God's mouth, not from my mouth; this is what God says in His Word. In the same way, our school teachers and professors must be able to say: I teach from the mouth of God; thus saith the Lord; thus it is written.

3. Inspiration does not extend merely to a part of Scripture, such as the principal things, or to what was previously unknown to the sacred writers, etc., but to the whole of Scripture. What is part of Scripture is also inspired by God. This and nothing else is expressed in the words: "All Scripture is inspired by God." We would do violence to these words if we wanted to exclude parts of Scripture from inspiration, such as those parts that contain interwoven historical remarks or descriptions of countries and natural things, or even events that were already known to the sacred writers beforehand. In discussing the question of the extent of inspiration in Scripture, we emphasize the word "all": "all

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2) Thus already before Calixt the Jesuit Bellarmin († 1621) and other Jesuits. In Quenstedt I, 99 sq. Likewise Grotius († 1645 in Rostock). In Quenstedt, I. c., p. 100.

3) Quenstedt I, 98 sq., against Calixt and Bellarmin.

Scripture inspired by God". 4) [4) Quenstedt I, 98] John 10:35 also belongs here again: "The Scriptures cannot be broken."

4. The inspiration of Scripture naturally also includes the divine impulse and the command to write. When Roman theologians, such as Bellarmin and other Jesuits, admit that the writings of the New Testament were also inspired or inspired by God to the evangelists and apostles, but nevertheless deny that the evangelists and apostles had God's will and command for their writing,[5)] [5) Bellarmin, *De Verbo Dei* IV, 3; in Quenstedt I, 94] this is a contradiction in terms. God would not have given or inspired the sacred writers their writings if they had not had God's will and command to write them. The old Lutheran theologians therefore rightly say that inspiration always includes God's will and command to perform the act of writing (*importare*). That the Romanists absurdly deny this is due to the fact that they want to lower the prestige of Holy Scripture and, on the other hand, raise the prestige of the "oral tradition" they fabricate. [Against Biermann and his “tradition”!] Recent Protestants who deny the inspiration of Holy Scripture have also claimed that the apostles wrote their letters "by chance". The intention is the same as with the Romans. They also want to evade the divine authority of Holy Scripture. They therefore argue that the writings of the apostles were only prompted by particular circumstances in the individual congregations of their time and could therefore not be a rule and guideline for the church of later times until the Last Day. The letter to the Romans was prompted by the fact that the apostle Paul "coincidentally" had not yet been in Rome and therefore had the idea of writing a letter to the Roman church, Rom. 1:13 ff. The apostle had written to the Corinthians because he had "accidentally" learned from Chloe's servants that the church was suffering from partisanship. But anyone who calls these occasions "accidental" and wants to prove from them that the apostle's word is not the source and guideline of Christian doctrine for the church of all times must basically deny that there is a God who has all "accidental occasions" in his hands. Christ expressly says that he teaches Christianity until the Last Day through the word of his apostles, John 17:20. The apostles are also aware that their teaching covers the entire period of the church until the end of time, 1 Cor. 11:26; 18:12; 1 Tim. 6:13-14. Luther was also already aware of the objection that the letters of the apostles could not have general validity because they were prompted by special circumstances in the individual congregations. He deals with this in his writing "On the Babylonian Captivity of the Church", where he says (XIX, 19 f.):

"If we admit that any letter of Paul or any passage of any letter does not concern the general church, then the whole reputation of Paul is already destroyed. For the Corinthians will say that what he teaches about faith in his letter to the Romans does not concern them. What could be more blasphemous and nonsensical than this foolishness? Far be it from him, far be it from him, that there should be any trifle in all of Paul, whom the whole universal church should not follow and hold! Such was not the opinion of the fathers until these perilous times, in which, as Paul foretold, there would be blasphemers, blind people, and people of disturbed minds."

5. The fact that Holy Scripture is inspired by God and is therefore God's own Word also implies its complete inerrancy (*infallibilitas Scripturae Sacrae, infallibility, inerrancy of Holy Scripture*), because "to err is human", but not divine. That there can be no error in Holy Scripture, we still have the testimony of the Son of God himself, as we have repeatedly recalled, when he says in John 10:35: "The Scripture cannot be broken." One of our old Lutheran theologians, namely Quenstedt, says: "In the canonical Holy Scriptures there is no lie, no false statement, none, not even the slightest error, either in things or in words, but the whole and the particular is entirely true, whatever is taught therein, whether it concern doctrine of faith or morals or history, chronology, description of places or names, and no ignorance, no carelessness or forgetfulness, no error of memory can or may be ascribed to the writers of the Holy Spirit in writing the Scriptures." 6) [6) *Systema* I, 112] These words of Quenstedt sound appalling to modern ears, but they do not go even one line beyond Christ's words: "The Scriptures cannot be broken" and beyond his Apostle's words: "All Scripture is inspired by God."

The relationship of the Holy Spirit to the writers of the Holy Scriptures.

More recent theologians declare the relationship of the Holy Spirit to be an insoluble problem. They want to leave the relationship undefined. But they speak here of an insoluble problem in the interest of their position, according to which the boundary between truth and error cannot be clearly defined in Scripture. But the Scriptures indicate the relationship between the Holy Spirit and the writers of Holy Scripture very precisely by saying that the Lord spoke "through the prophet" (Matt. 1:22; 2:15) and that the Holy Spirit "spoke through the mouth of David" (Acts 1:16; 4:25). According to this, God used the holy scribes as his mouth, that is, as

his organs or instruments, and indeed as his organs and instruments in such a way that they did not write their word, but God's word. Paul tells the Corinthian church in 1 Cor. 14:37: "The things I write are the commandments of the Lord", thus justifying the claim that all those in the church who considered themselves "prophets" and "spiritual" were subject to His Word. The Jewish people had the advantage over other peoples that with the Holy Scriptures they were entrusted with what "God had spoken". Thus Scripture itself provides very clear information about the relationship of the Holy Spirit to the writers of Holy Scripture. The sacred writers were no more and no less than organs or instruments of the Holy Spirit in the creation of Holy Scripture. To describe this relationship (of instrumentality), both the Church Fathers and the old Lutheran theologians call the sacred scribes pens of the Holy Spirit, hands of the Holy Spirit, notaries, scribes, secretaries of the Holy Spirit. These expressions are much ridiculed by more recent theologians. But these expressions are scriptural as long as the point of comparison (the tertium comparationis) is maintained, namely that the holy scribes were only God's instruments in writing the Holy Scriptures. They are intended to express no more and no less than that the sacred writers did not write their own word, but God's Word. And this is true, as we have seen from Scripture itself. But that the sacred writers were not dead, mechanical instruments, but living ones, equipped with reason and will and a certain style, a certain mode of expression (modus dicendi), has also been very emphatically emphasized by the ancient theologians. If more recent theologians ascribe to our ancient theologians a purely mechanical concept of inspiration, this is a pure invention and at best can be attributed to ignorance on the part of the ancient dogmatists. Quenstedt explains in I, 109 f., quoting from the Church Fathers and Lutheran teachers, that the Holy Spirit took the natural disposition and formation of the individual writers into His service. He also uses the Church Fathers' image of a musical instrument. [Cp. this blog post.] In a musical instrument (e.g. in an organ) the pipes sound unequally, but the player is only one. Quenstedt also describes in detail the different styles in the writings of the Old and New Testaments.

III.

The objections to the inspiration of Scripture are null and void.

The objections to the literal inspiration of Scripture do not reveal cleverness or sharpness of mind, but just the opposite. We have in the objections a clear example of the fact that every critic of the Word of God is struck by God's

judgment, also in the sense that the critic also denies his natural understanding or common sense, becomes unreasonable and illogical. This will confront us when we examine the objections.

1. The different styles found in the various books of Scripture have been objected to against inspiration. By style we mean the particular manner which we perceive in a certain writer in the use of certain words and modes of speech, in the arrangement of sentences, in the connection of sentences with one another, etc. Just as people are distinguished from one another by their facial features, so that we can recognize them from one another — by the way, this is a very useful divine arrangement among men — so people are also distinguished from one another by the way they express their thoughts orally and in writing. To give a few examples: Luther writes in a different style from Melanchthon and Chemnitz, Gerhard in a different style from Dannhauer, Walther in a different style from Sihler, Goethe in a different style from Schiller, Shakespeare in a different style from Longfellow. So too in the Holy Scriptures. Isaiah clearly writes in a different style from Amos, Matthew in a different style from John, Paul in a different style from Peter. This is also recognizable in the translations. The argument used by the deniers of inspiration goes like this: If all Scripture were inspired by God, then only one style should be found in the whole of Scripture. Much is made of this argument, and yet it is very foolish. — We reply to this argument: The different styles do not contradict divine inspiration, but are required by it, because God spoke not only through one, but through several men, each of whom had his own style, and which God used to communicate His Word as he found it in the individual writers. God could not use his own divine style when he wanted to speak to us humans because we would not understand it. This can also be seen, for example, in 2 Corinthians 12:4. There the apostle Paul reports that he was raptured in the heavenly paradise and heard words there. But they were "unspeakable words, which no man can utter", 2 Cor. 12:4, namely on earth, in human society. Thank God for his grace that he spoke to us humans in the human style he found in the holy writers, in order to lead us to heaven! The heavenly style, which we cannot understand here on earth, we will one day understand in heaven. Quenstedt says (I, 109): "As the holy writers were educated or accustomed to speak and write more loftily or more simply, so the Holy Spirit used them and wanted to adapt himself to the nature of men and condescend to them." It is the same with human speech in Scripture as with Christ's walk

on earth during the thirty-three years. In order to redeem us men, that is, to fulfill the law in our place and to suffer and die in our stead, Christ had to become like another man and be found in appearance as a man, Phil. 2:7. Had he appeared in divine glory, everything in the Jewish land would have fled from him from Dan to Beersaba. So Christ, having acquired salvation for all mankind, became man in the Holy Scriptures in order to be able to distribute the acquired salvation to mankind. This could not be done in heavenly speech, which we humans would not have understood, but only in the speech and language in which people communicate with each other here on earth.

2. Another objection to inspiration has been the fact that the sacred writers rely on human research, human information, and human knowledge. This is indeed the case. The evangelist Luke says that what he writes "he has known all things from the beginning" (Luke 1:3). The apostle Paul says in 1 Cor. 1:11: "It has come to me [that is, it has been reported] through those of Chloe's household [family] that there is strife among you." The apostle John says in 1 John 1:3-4: "What we have seen and heard we declare to you … and these things we write to you." The argument that the deniers of inspiration want to take from this against inspiration goes like this: If the sacred writers were inspired by God as to what they should write, why do they refer to their own research, communication from others and their own experience for what they have written? That contradicts itself! Why don't they just stick to what they say: God, Christ, the Holy Spirit speaks through us? Answer: This objection belongs to the same class as the objection that is taken from the different style. Just as the Holy Spirit used the style that he found in the individual writers, so he also used the historical knowledge that the writers had through their own experience or through research or through communication from other people. We have an example of this in the account of the first Pentecost, Acts 2: The apostles knew about the resurrection of Christ through their own experience. They had seen and heard the risen Christ. Nevertheless, on the first Pentecost they also spoke of the resurrection of Christ, "as the Spirit gave them utterance", Acts 2:4. In the Psalms David also speaks of the fear of sin and the consolation of grace from his own experience, and at the same time he attributes his Psalms to the inspiration of the Holy Spirit when he says of his Psalms in 2 Sam. 28:2: "The Spirit of the Lord has spoken through me, and his word has come through my tongue." Luther remarks on this (St. L. III, 1890): "What a glorious, lofty boast this is! He who may boast that the Spirit of the Lord speaks through him,

and that his tongue speaks the word of the Holy Spirit, must of course be very certain of his own affairs. This will not be David, the son of Jesse, born in sin, but the one raised up as a prophet by God's promise. Should he not make sweet psalms who has such a master, who teaches him and speaks through him? Hear now, he who has ears to hear! My speech is not my speech, but he who hears me hears God; he who despises me despises God. For I see that many of my descendants will not hear my words, to their great detriment. Neither we [Luther — Chemnitz, Gerhard, Quenstedt — Walther, Sihler — professors in St. Louis — pastors from the pulpit — teachers in the classroom] nor anyone who is not a prophet may have such fame. This we may do, provided we are also holy and have the Holy Spirit, that we catechumens and disciples of the prophets may boast as those who repeat and preach what we have heard and learned from the prophets and apostles, and are also certain that the prophets taught it. These are called in the Old Testament the 'children of the prophets', who do not set up anything of their own or new things, as the prophets do, but teach what they have from the prophets, and are 'Israel', as David says, to whom he makes the psalms." The writings of Christian teachers contain God's Word, taken from Scripture; Holy Scripture, on the other hand, is God's Word, especially in the Psalms, which the Holy Spirit speaks "out of David's experience".

3. The various readings (variants) found in the copies we have of the original writings have also been used against the inspiration of Holy Scripture. These various readings are indeed a fact. The situation is this: We no longer possess the original writings of the apostles, which were written in the first century, but only copies. The oldest copies that have come down to us date from the fourth century of the Christian church. And in these copies there are slight differences in some places, which are the result of mistakes made by the copyists. The argument that the deniers of inspiration want to take from this is as follows: because there are obviously scribal errors in the copies, it is no longer possible to determine exactly which are the original words of God, and therefore the inspiration of the Word must be abandoned as useless. The first answer to this is that scribal errors in copies have nothing whatsoever to do with the inspiration of the original writings. Let us take an example from our civil circumstances. Our state legislatures adopt laws. If errors occur in the copies or impressions from an oversight on the part of the copyist or printer, we do not reasonably draw the conclusion that the law was not adopted

in a particular wording at all. We refute the further objection that we cannot know exactly whether we still have the necessary Word of God in our time, which Christ gave to the Church through his apostles, in two ways. That we nevertheless possess the word of the apostles, despite the slight differences in the copies, we know first of all quite precisely and before all human investigation from the divine promise. Our Savior says John 8:31-32: "If ye continue in my word, ye are my true disciples, and shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." This admonition of Christ to abide in His Word naturally applies to the entire time of the Christian Church until the Last Day. But the exhortation to abide by His Word foresees that Christ's word will be available until the Last Day. But that we have Christ's Word in the word of his apostles, Christ himself says in the high priestly prayer, where it says in John 17:20: "I do not pray for them [namely the apostles] alone, but also for those who will believe in me through their [namely the apostles'] word." If all Christians come to faith through the word of the apostles until the Last Day, it is thereby presupposed and promised that the apostles' word will not be lost until the Last Day, but will be present. The same is clear from Eph. 2:20, where it says of the Christian Church for the entire time of its existence: "Built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets." Secondly, we also know that we have the word of the apostles, despite the slight differences in the copies, through human investigation, which we can also call scientific research. For we can ascertain that the various readings (variants) available do not alter Christian doctrine in the slightest. This is admitted by the very men who have made the investigation of the various readings a special study. It would be a futile objection if someone wanted to say: Because 1 John 6:7 contains the words about the three witnesses in heaven. Because the words about the three witnesses in heaven are missing in the oldest copies, therefore the testimony about the Holy Trinity is missing in the New Testament. Folly! There are other very clear passages for this teaching, e.g. Matt. 28:19: "Baptize them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit", and 2 Cor. 13:13: "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all!"

4. Finally, the inspiration of Scripture is denied by the assertion that there are contradictory passages in Scripture. With regard to these alleged contradictions, to summarize briefly, it stands thus: With reasonably good will and reasonably diligent attention, the possibility of reconciliation can be easily demonstrated in most cases. For example, a

contradiction has been found between 1 Cor. 10:8 and Num. 26:9. In the former passage, the apostle Paul writes: "23,000 fell in one day", while in the latter passage it says: "24,000 were killed in the plague." This apparent contradiction was recently given by a pastor outside our synod as a reason why he could not accept the inspiration of the Word of Scripture. But here, too, a balance is easily possible. The apostle Paul gives the number of those who fell in one day, as he himself says, and that was 23,000, while Numbers 25:9 gives the number of those who were killed in the whole plague. If Paul only mentions 23,000, he is not counting the rulers of the people whom Moses had killed by hanging at God's command according to Numbers 25:4. There may well have been 1000 of them. If these are added, the total comes to 24,000. Everyone should admit that this compensation is possible. And one possibility of compensation must be enough for any fair-minded person. It is unreasonable to demand proof that a particular solution to the apparent contradiction is the only correct one. Because we do not know the exact circumstances (place and time) of some reported events, we must admit several possibilities of reconciliation from the outset. This is what our old Lutheran theologians say. So also Luther, when he often reminds us that it does not matter whether one resolves an apparent contradiction in one way or another. Incidentally, even in the sectarian community there are still theologians from time to time who firmly declare the Scriptures to be God's Word and therefore also say the right thing about the resolution of apparent contradictions. Thus A. T. Robertson (in Broadus, *Harmony of the Gospels*, p. 232) says: "*In explaining a difficulty, it is always to be remembered that even a possible explanation is sufficient to meet the objector. If several possible explanations are suggested, it becomes all the more unreasonable to contend that the discrepancy is irreconcilable. It is work of supererogation to proceed to show that this or that explanation is the real solution of the problem*." If, however, a case should occur to us where we do not recognize a possibility of reconciliation, we as Christians leave the matter alone, because we believe the inerrancy of Scripture on the authority and clear testimony of the Son of God, who says in John 10:35 precisely with regard to the words of Scripture: "And yet the Scripture cannot be broken." Pastor G. Schulze in Walsleben said very correctly: "We await the time when it will be clarified, and die confidently, even if it does not happen." (Quoted in *L. u. W.* 1891, p. 357) All objections against the inspiration and therefore also against the inerrancy of Scripture are unworthy of a Christian, because they place human judgment in relation to the Holy Scriptures above the judgment of Christ, the Son of God. Whoever believes Christ in John 3:16:

"God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son" can also believe him in John 10:35, where he says: "The Scriptures cannot be broken."

This is also Luther's judgment on Scripture, not only at the beginning of his life, but also at the end of his life. He wrote in 1520: "Scripture cannot err." (St. L. XIX, 1073) In the same year: "Scripture has never yet erred." (XV, 1481) In 1524: "Scripture agrees everywhere." (III, 18) In 1527: "It is certain that Scripture cannot be at variance with itself." (XX, 798) In 1535: "It is impossible that the Scriptures should be contrary to themselves, without the ignorant, coarse and obstinate hypocrites [thinking so]." (W. VIII, 2141.) In the years 1541 and 1545 Luther speaks in his "Chronikon" of the fact that the dates of ancient human historians sometimes do not agree with the dates of Holy Scripture, and adds that in such cases Holy Scripture is always right, because it is God's Word. Luther says (St. L. XIV, 491): "I use them (namely the human historians) in such a way that I am not forced to contradict Scripture. For I believe that in Scripture the truthful God speaks, but in the histories good men show their diligence and faithfulness (but as men), or at least that the copyists could have erred." [See this blog post.]

Summary.

So let us not forget: Holy Scripture is the book in which God himself speaks to us. Let us consider daily what a wonderful, unique book it is that we have in our homes and can use at any time. In it God reveals to us first of all our sin, by which we have earned God's wrath and eternal damnation. But God reveals our sin to us in the Bible, not in order to destroy us, but in order to grant us forgiveness of sins through the same Bible for the sake of Christ. — Furthermore, God himself tells us not just once, but often in the Bible, what works are pleasing to him and what works we must avoid so that we do not lose our heavenly inheritance. And when affliction comes upon us and we open our Bible or someone reads it to us, it is God himself who comforts us as a mother comforts him.

Thank God that He has given us the Holy Scriptures! With the Bible in our hands, we can walk confidently and safely through this life. In it we have sufficient light in the darkness of this world. In it we also have sufficient strength in our weakness; for because the Bible is God's Word, it is endowed with divine power, which becomes effective in us and passes over into us as often as we

use the Bible. It works in us both that we do not err with the erring world and to ensure that we do not fall into its same disorderly ways. It also keeps us from slothfulness in the works which God wants us to do and which are pleasing to him. For if we want to become cold and sluggish in good works, let us open our Bible and warm our hearts with the fire of divine love that beats against us in such Bible words as: "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life", John 3:16. That is why our prayer is [according to the German]:

Let your word, O Lord, be always
The lamp unto our feet,
Keep it with us clear and pure,
Help us to enjoy from it
Strength, counsel and comfort in all adversity,
That in life and in death
That we may constantly trust in it!

God the Father, for your honor
Your word spread far and wide;
Help, Jesus, that your teaching
May enlighten and guide us;
O Holy Spirit, your divine Word
Let it work in us again and again
Patience, love, hope, faith!

(No. 178, 9. 10.)

Amen.

The Open Heaven. ^

Lecture at the Delegate Synod A.D.. 1929 by F. Pieper.

I.

Venerable Fathers and Brethren!

I would like to draw our attention to the open heaven at this year's Synod of Delegates. Holy Scripture does not always use the word "heaven" in the same sense. When it says in Scripture: "In the beginning God created heaven and earth" 1) [1) Gen 1:1] and: "The heavens were made by the Word of the Lord, and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth", 2) [2) Ps 33:6] it speaks of the heaven of creation, of the heaven we see with our eyes. This heaven is still beautiful even after the fall into sin. It is worth looking at. Scripture also invites us to do so. Thus in the 104th Psalm: "Praise the LORD, my soul! O Lord my God, you are very glorious; you are beautiful and splendidly adorned. Light is the garment you wear. You spread out the heavens like a carpet. You arch it above with water; you lead on the clouds as on a chariot and walk on the wings of the wind. … O Lord, how great and many are your works! You have wisely ordered them all, and the earth is full of your

riches." [Ps. 104:1-3, 24] In his "Summaries of the Psalms", Luther comments on the 104th Psalm: "It is a psalm of thanksgiving for all other works besides man, which God has created in heaven and on earth, how they are so orderly, certain and wise in their works, fruits and benefits. Therefore he counts them one by one, so that the heavens are full of light and stand without pillars and beams like a carpet spread out; the clouds are like a vault without foundation or pillars; the winds fly without feathers; the angels, sent forth, come as a wind and flames. So play and take pleasure in God's creatures, so wonderfully created and so beautifully arranged among themselves." 3) [3) St. L. IV, 179 f.]

But of this heaven, which we see with our bodily eyes and contemplate with joy and admiration, Scripture says that it is passing away. The Savior says: "Heaven and earth will pass away." 4) [4) Matt. 24:35] But we will now speak of heaven, which does not pass away but remains forever. It is of this heaven that Scripture primarily speaks. It is for the sake of this heaven that Holy Scripture was written and given to us. It is the heaven with which the Savior comforts his fainthearted disciples when they are not granted a dwelling place here on earth, saying: "In my Father's house are many mansions. "5) [5) John 14:2] And in the high priestly prayer he prays: "Father, I want those whom you have given me to be with me where I am, that they may see my glory which you have given me." 6) [6) John 17:24] In short, by heaven, of which we want to speak in particular, we understand the heaven of eternal life, of eternal salvation, the eternal, blessed life in the fellowship of God, the holy angels and all the blessed. We understand the heaven of which St. Paul says: "But we know that if our earthly house, this tabernacle, is broken down, we have a building built by God, a house not made with hands, eternal, in heaven." 7) [7) 2 Cor. 5:1] We understand heaven, which St. Peter describes as the "inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and unfading, reserved in heaven".8) [8) 1 Pet. 1:4] We mean the heaven of which we sing in the hymn:

Jerusalem, you city built on high,
Would to God I were in thee!

and: O castle of honor, greet me now,
Open the gate of grace!

and: What a people, what a noble crowd
Are already drawn there?

and: Prophets great and patriarchs high,
Christians too in general,
Who once bore the yoke of the cross
And the torment of tyrants,
I see floating in honor,
In freedom everywhere,
With clarity brightly surrounded,
With sunlit rays.

And of this heaven we say from Scripture that it is open to all men. Were this not the case, I would stop my lecture here and advise that we adjourn, cover our heads and draw our sorrowful steps. Human life would not be worth living, as St. Paul also says of Christians: "If in this life alone we hope in Christ, we are the most miserable of all men. "9) [9) 1 Cor. 15:19] But now heaven is open, and therefore I firmly advise that we remain in session. Our synodical assembly here in River Forest also applies to and serves the open heaven. And if in these days of synodical assembly we look in faith to the open heaven, remembering that the purpose of our synodical association is none other than to introduce people to the open heaven, we are rightly oriented from the outset and by God's grace will stay on the right track in speech and resolutions.

Yes, heaven is open! Of course, heaven was closed to us humans because of the Fall of our first parents. The fellowship with God, for which man was created, came to an end through the fall of man. When our first parents transgressed God's commandment through Satan's deceit, they not only brought guilt of sin upon themselves, but also upon all their descendants, upon the entire human race, and with the guilt of sin, death and damnation. All argumentation against this fact, which has happened and is still happening in abundance, is completely futile. "Through one man's sin condemnation has come upon all men." 10) [10) Rom. 5:18] Equally futile are all human efforts to regain fellowship with God through their own actions, through their own works, to reopen the closed heaven. Man must leave it forever. By the works of the law no flesh is justified.11) [11) Gal. 2, 16] But as certain as this is, there is nevertheless an open heaven.

How is this so? It is because God did not abandon the human race for the sake of the Fall. According to Scripture, God loves people. "His delight is with the children of men." 12) [12) Proverbs 8:31] God loves people. God is a philanthropist, a "lover of mankind", as Luther preaches in the early Christmas Mass on the second day of Christmas on the text Titus 3:4-8.13) [13) St. L. XII, 130; *AE* 75, 232] Luther uses the strange expression here: "God does not love the person, but the nature, and is not called a lover of persons but a lover of people." With this, Luther wants to indelibly impress the comforting truth that God's love for mankind "does not make a distinction of person among men", but "affects everything that is called a man, however small it may be". When God saw the human race made miserable by the devil's seduction, plunged into sinfulness and thus into

death and damnation, his love for the human race was not extinguished, but rather fanned into a bright flame. God did not turn away from the fallen human race, but drew even closer to it. He allowed his eternal Son, God from God, Light from Light, to become man, to take on human nature, i.e. to become a member of the human order, in order to lead and represent the cause of the whole order before Him. He committed his incarnate Son to fulfill the whole law given to men in the place of men.14) [14) Gal. 4:4-5] He also committed him to take upon himself the whole guilt of sin that lay upon the human race.15) [15) Gal. 3, 13] And this the incarnate Son of God did 16) [16) Ps. 40:9, 13; Ps. 69:6] and thus opened heaven again completely to all men without exception.

And these are not our thoughts. This is not man-made theology, not theology devised in Chicago or St. Louis. No, this is God's own teaching in his word. For we read 2 Cor. 5:19: "God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them." These words describe exactly how heaven came to be open to all people. First of all, it is said here that we are dealing with a work that is not the work of man, but the work of God. It says: "God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself." Here, on the other hand, we are told how God brought about or accomplished the reconciliation of the world. In the work of reconciliation, the world stood before God laden with sins. But God did not impute their sins to them, the sinners, but He did impute the sins of sinners to the One who, among all the sons of men, knew no sin, His incarnate Son, as is immediately added in the following: "For God made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, so that in Him we might become the righteousness that is before God." [2 Cor. 5:21] Furthermore, it is stated how far the atonement and the heaven that is open through it reaches. It says: "God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself, not imputing their trespasses to them." The reconciliation and the heaven it opens extends as far as the human world, from the first human couple after the Fall, from Adam and Eve, to the last man to be born on the Last Day. For the apostle does not say: "God was in Christ, reconciling" half the world or a quarter of the world to himself, but "the world." The world without restriction was reconciled with God 1900 [now 2000] years ago through the Lamb of God who bears the sin of the world, was absolved of the guilt of sin in God's heart and declared righteous. Just as through Adam's sin God's judgment of guilt and condemnation came upon the whole human world, so

also through Christ's righteousness performed for mankind God's judgment of justification and life came upon the whole human world. Scripture teaches this quite explicitly. Romans 5:18-19 says: "As through one [namely, Adam's] sin came condemnation to all men, so also through one [namely, Christ's] righteousness came justification of life to all men." This and nothing else is also illustrated by the miraculous event at the atoning death of Christ: "And behold, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom." 17) [17) Matt. 27:51] God's wrath against human sin has come to an end. Christ has entered the holy place once through his own blood and has brought eternal redemption.18) [18) Heb. 9:12] The sacrificial lamb chosen by God himself, who bears the sin of the world, has taken away the guilt of sin of all people. Heaven is open to all people. And finally, what God did in Christ for the whole human world 1900 [now 2000] years ago, without people asking him to do it, indeed without them even knowing about it, God did not keep it secret in his heart, but commanded it to be proclaimed to the whole world. "God has committed unto us the word of reconciliation." This does not refer to the reconciliation that takes place in the heart and conscience of man when he repents and believes in Christ. [I.e. not subjective, but objective!] 19) [19) 2 Cor. 5:20. Apology 101, 81] Here we are talking about the reconciliation by which God reconciled the whole world to himself through the atoning sacrifice of his Son 1900 [now 2000] years ago, before they knew about it and asked God for it. Here we are talking about the reconciliation of which it says: "We" — we human beings — "have been reconciled to God through the death of his Son, while we were still enemies", 20) [20) Rom. 5:10] in short, about the reconciliation through which — by virtue of Christ's unique atoning sacrifice — heaven is open to all human beings, no human being excepted. God wants this to be broadcast to the whole world. This divine message is expressed in the words: "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature!" 21) [21) Mark 16:15-16] Because preaching the gospel means preaching that through reconciliation, which has happened through Christ, heaven is open to all people. To preach Christ crucified is to preach that through Christ's blood and death heaven is open to all men. He who does not preach heaven open to all men through Christ does not preach the gospel; he does not preach Christ crucified; he does not preach the love of God for the lost human race, about the greatness of which Christ himself marvels when he says: "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son"; 22) [22) Joh. 3:16] he does not preach the reconciliation that came through Christ and which St. John

praises with the words: "Christ is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours alone, but also for the whole world." 23) [23) 1 John 2:2]

There is much talk today of the right "worldview". But everything that the world generally puts under the comprehensive heading of "worldview" is trivial. We only have the right worldview when we recognize and hold on to the fact that heaven is open to all people through the reconciliation that took place through Christ. For Christ teaches us that the world still exists for the proclamation of this fact when he says: "The gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world for a witness to all nations, and then the end will come." 24) [24) Matt. 24:14]

This is also the right worldview that we need for our work in Christ's kingdom. Wherever we proclaim God's Word, whether at home or abroad, we only meet people for whom heaven is open through Christ. Luther reminds us of this in the aforementioned Christmas sermon. He reminds us, as we have heard, that with regard to the word we have to proclaim, we should "make no distinction of persons among men", but should remember that the message "touches everything that is called man", however low or high he may be. As far as reconciliation through Christ is concerned, there is no distinction of race, color, class, culture and unculture, worldly respectability and worldly reproach. Our synod has its ecclesiastical work, as far as skin color is concerned, among people from the deepest black to the whitest white and all shades in between. Heaven is open to all through the reconciliation that has come through Christ. There is no difference of status between employers and laborers, between rich and poor, between king and pauper. Heaven is open to all through the reconciliation that took place through Christ. There is also no difference between civil honor and civil reproach. Heaven is open to the criminal who is led to the place of judgment and of whom we judge that what his deeds are worth is done to him, through the reconciliation that has taken place through Christ. As an example of this, the Savior of all men publicly received the penitent thief into his kingdom with the words: "Today shalt thou be with me in paradise." In sum: Heaven is open to all men, none excepted, through the atonement that took place through Christ. This is most certainly true!

II.

We have been reminded from the Holy Scriptures that heaven is open to all men through the reconciliation of the world which took place through Christ 1900 [now 2000] years ago. That was a happy chapter. But why don't all people go to heaven? Today we have to deal with the sad chapter that and how people fight against the heaven opened by Christ and thereby close the open heaven to themselves. They do this in several ways and forms: partly quite openly, by directly rejecting Christ's atoning sacrifice, partly in a more hidden way, under the appearance of Christian piety, with reference to the Holy Scriptures, even with the claim to orthodoxy. Himmelsverschluß has made the most decisive claim to be the flower of true Lutheranism. We must beware of all those who close the heavens. That is the purpose of dealing with this extremely sad chapter. We could also translate the content of this chapter as "heaven-locking".

Unitarians openly practice the closure of heaven. Under the general name "Unitarians" we understand all religious fellowships and associations which deny that God was in Christ and, through him, reconciled the world to himself. The Unitarians deny the eternal, essential deity of Christ and consequently also the reconciliation of the world through Christ's vicarious satisfaction (*satisfactio vicaria*, or vicarious atonement). In other words, they deny the doctrine that Christ reconciled mankind to God and opened heaven to them through his fulfillment of the law in the place of mankind and through his innocent suffering and death in the place of mankind. They deny the teaching of Holy Scripture, which Luther confesses in his Small Catechism with these powerful words: "I believe that Jesus Christ, truly God, born of the Father in eternity, and also true man, born of the Virgin Mary, is my Lord, who has redeemed me a lost and condemned

man, purchased and won me from all sins, from death and from the power of the devil, not with gold or silver, but with his holy, precious blood and with his innocent suffering and death, that I may be his own and live under him in his kingdom." This is what all Unitarians deny! Admittedly, many of them praise Christ. They place him in the first place among all known founders of religion. But at the same time they regard Christ as a mere man. They reduce him to a mere moral teacher who, through his sublime example of virtue, taught and encouraged people that and how they could and should open heaven for themselves through their own virtue and works. This is the delusion in which all Unitarians are caught up. From this delusion they also go on the offensive. They declare the Christian doctrine that God has reconciled people to himself through Christ's vicarious life and death, thereby opening heaven to them, to be not only superfluous, but also harmful to morality. Unitarians therefore go on — with the Unitarian lodges — to call on Christians to "kneel at a common altar" with Jews, Buddhists, Confucians and other representatives of pagan religions. Even more! Unitarians have dared to invoke Christ himself for their rejection of the Christian religion. They occasionally point to the words of Christ: "In my Father's house are many mansions." Christ did indeed speak these words. We find them in John 14:2. But the Unitarians forget that the same Christ declares very definitely that there is only one door to the many mansions in the Father's house. He says: "I am the way and the truth and the life; no one comes to the Father except through me." 25) [25) Joh. 14:6] And again: "If you do not believe that I am he, you will die in your sins." 26) [26) Joh. 8:24] Therefore it is certain that Christ, the Savior of the world crucified to pay for the sins of the world, is the only door to heaven. There is no way past him into heaven. What a pity! Christ has also earned a place in heaven for the Unitarians. But if they continue to deny the Lord who bought them with his blood,27) [27) 2 Peter 2:1] they exclude themselves from the open heaven. The mansions purchased for them remain empty. They bring upon themselves eternal condemnation, from which they have been redeemed by Christ.28) [28) 2 Pet 2:1b]

What a sad fact it is, therefore, that the Unitarian religion, which closes the open heaven, has very generally penetrated even into such Reformed communities of our country, which formerly still confessed Christ's divinity and his substitutionary satisfaction! Unitarianism also prevails almost universally in the theological departments of the great and famous universities of our country. [E.g. Harvard, etc.] Your speaker cannot forget that the long-time president of one

of our famous universities, even at the end of his term of office, declared that the American youth would never again be persuaded to return to the vicarious satisfaction of Christ as the only way to heaven. Of course, that is saying too much. Our American youth, whether originally of British or German or other descent, are also returning to the only way to heaven where that way is truly taught. We know that for sure. Where this way, the crucified Christ, is taught, the Holy Spirit ensures that this teaching is not entirely without fruit.29) [Isaiah 55:10-11] Our own Christian youth is proof of this. Moreover, there is no lack of examples of even those Unitarians who fought the vicarious satisfaction of Christ all their lives returning to this teaching from their sick and dying beds. Here in the United States we had the Congregationalist Horace Bushnell († 1876), who in his life denied the vicarious sacrifice of Christ. But when it came to his death, he said, as L. W. Munhall reports: "I fear what I have written and said upon the moral idea of atonement is misleading and will do great harm. O Lord Jesus, I trust for mercy only in the shed blood that Thou didst offer on Calvary. "30) [30) Quoted in Strong, *Systematic Theology,* p. 739 f.] In Germany they had Prof. Albrecht Ritschl at the University of Göttingen almost at the same time, who had also become well-known in America. In his life he could not stand Paul Gerhardt's hymn "O Sacred Head Now Wounded". But when he was dying, he asked his son to read him the last two verses of Gerhardt's hymn:

If I am to part one day,
So do not part from me;
If I am to suffer death,
Then come forward.
When I am most anxious,
Will be for my heart,
Tear me from my fears
Power of your fear and torment.

Appear to me as a shield,
For comfort in my death,
And let me see your image
In your suffering on the cross.
Then I will look to you,
Then I will believingly
Hold you close to my heart.
He who dies thus, dies well.

Herein lies the confession that there is an open heaven only through Christ's atoning sacrifice and that all those exclude themselves from the open heaven who want to make their way into heaven by their own virtue and works, bypassing Christ's atoning sacrifice.

Furthermore, all those who teach that Christ has acquired grace and opened heaven for only a part of mankind are practicing the closure of heaven. This is the teaching of Calvinists old and new, including our American Calvinists. Calvin thinks that God wants to save about twenty percent of mankind; the remaining

eighty percent he created from the beginning for damnation. 31) [31) *Institutiones*, III, 24, 12; cf. III, 21, 5] God wants to save all kinds of people, but not all.32) [32) A. a. O., III, 24, 16] Calvin is quite rude to those who teach universal grace for the sake of Christ. He calls their doctrine "beyond measure nonsensical and childish".33) [33) A. a. O., III, 23, 1] Prof. Charles Hodge of the American Princeton University rejects somewhat more politely, but just as decisively, the scriptural doctrine that God has reconciled the whole human world with himself through Christ. He believes that this is an idea unworthy of God. He argues that no rational being would be foolish enough to go to the expense of an undertaking that he knew in advance would not lead to the goal. Much less should one attribute to the all-powerful and all-wise God that he reconciled the whole world to himself, since he knew very well that not the whole world would attain salvation.34) [34) *Systematic Theology,* II, 323 sq.] The *Westminster Confession of Faith* just as decisively rejects the doctrine that the redemption that happened through Christ refers to all people: "Neither are any others redeemed by Christ, effectually called ... but the elect only." 35) [35) Chap. III, 5] The Calvinist Reformed thus take the liberty of simply crossing out Scripture words like these: "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself", "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son", "Behold, this is the Lamb of God who bears the sin of the world", "Christ is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours alone, but also for the sins of the whole world".36) [36) 2 Cor. 5, 19; John 3, 16; 1, 29; 1 John 2, 2]

But in doing so, they are closing the open heaven to themselves and all those who follow them. How so? Well, as long as the conscience has not yet been struck by God's law, people are not particularly interested in the question of whether Christ died for one hundred percent or only twenty percent of people. He sees this as a question that theologians can argue about. But that changes as soon as man is struck by God's law, that is, as soon as he feels God's judgment of condemnation in his heart and conscience. In this state, he logically counts himself among the eighty percent whom Christ did not purchase from eternal damnation with his blood. And he must perish in despair if he cannot be pointed to the basic Christian truth that God was in Christ reconciling the world, not one person excepted, to himself. There is therefore no lack of testimonies from the Calvinist camp to the effect that the Calvinist must become Lutheran, that is, believe in God's completely unlimited general grace, if he is not to perish

through despair in temptation and agony. The same Calvin, who describes general grace as a childish notion, recommends the reference to God's general grace in the distress of temptation,37) [37) Inst., III, 24, 17] although he has actually lost the right to do so through his rejection of general grace. In contrast to Calvinism, Luther forcefully teaches that God's grace extends to all people and thus that heaven is open to all people. Luther knew from his own experience what a terrible distress it is when a person feels in his conscience that he is condemned to hell by God's holy law. On the other hand, Luther also knew from his own experience that there is a great doctrine, clearly revealed in Scripture, which saves from the greatest of all hardships, namely the completely unlimited grace of God, which embraces the whole human race and every single member of it. Luther writes: "Yes, you may say, who knows whether Christ also bears my sin? I do believe that he bore the sins of St. Peter, St. Paul and other saints; they were pious people; if I were also St. Peter or St. Paul! Do you not hear what St. John says here [1:29]? 'This is the Lamb of God who bears the sin of the world'? Now you cannot deny that you are also a part of the world. ... If you are [now] in the world and your sins are a part of the world's sin, this is what the text says: All that is called sin, the world and the sin of the world, from the beginning of the world to the end, rests on the Lamb of God alone." And our Lutheran Confession, the Formula of Concord,38) [38) M. 709, 28 ff.] says: "We must hold firmly and steadfastly in all ways that, as the preaching of repentance is universal, so also the promise of the Gospel is universal, that is, it is for all men." Every teacher who denies universal grace stands before the open door of heaven and, as far as he is concerned, refuses entrance to dearly bought souls. Let us therefore also be careful when recommending Calvinist writings. Even in our time there are Calvinists who earnestly want to uphold the inspiration of Holy Scripture and the vicarious satisfaction of Christ against Unitarians and others. But they do not allow these teachings to have their salutary effect if they also teach that Christ has reconciled only a part of mankind, about 20 percent, with God and therefore the Holy Scriptures should only be a word of grace for this part. Yes, that is the case: If Christ had died for all men except one, every sinner whose conscience is struck by the judgment of condemnation of the divine law would be inclined to consider himself the one unhappy man for whom Christ had not opened heaven. That is why our Lutheran Confessions warns so carefully: "We must hold fast in all ways that,

as the preaching of repentance is universal, so also the promise of the Gospel is universal, that is, it is for all men."

But the sad business of closing up heaven is practiced in even wider circles. It is practiced by all those who teach that there is a grace acquired by Christ for all people, but that this grace proclaimed and offered in the gospel and the effect of grace of the Holy Spirit to bring about faith in this gospel is not enough to get to heaven, but that this also requires man's works, his own actions and his own worthiness.

Thus the Roman Church. The Roman Church places itself before the door of heaven, which is open through Christ's perfect satisfaction, and demands that those who wish to enter must show a fulfillment of "the law of God and the commandments of the Church". This is what the Roman Church teaches in her principal confession, in the decisions of the Council of Trent.39) [39) Sessio VI, can. 20] Rome even pronounces a curse on all those who place their trust in divine mercy alone, which forgives sins for Christ's sake.40) [40) A. a. O., can. 12] That this requirement has the effect of shutting out heaven is taught in Scripture with the words: "You have lost Christ, who would be justified by the law, and have fallen from grace" and: "Those who practice the works of the law are under the curse." 41) [41) Gal. 5:4; 3:10]

The Arminian Reformed also stand before the door to heaven that Christ has opened completely. In contrast to the Calvinist Reformers, they want to teach that God's grace extends to all people. But, they add, God's grace in Christ is not enough for man's conversion and salvation; man must contribute to this through a power for spiritual good that has remained with him even after the fall. They maintain that God's grace in Christ cannot prevail without the cooperation of man's free will, non posse exire in actum sine cooperatione liberae voluntatis humanae.42) [42) Apol. Conf. Remonstr., p. 162; in Winer, Kompar. Darst.3, p. 81 f.] How impossible it is for man to fulfill this requirement and how heaven-closing this requirement is, is taught in Scripture when it says of every natural-born man after the fall: "Dead in sins";43) [43) Eph. 2:1-3] Note: not half-dead, but dead in sins. Furthermore: "The natural man hears nothing of the Spirit of God; it is foolishness to him and he cannot recognize it." 44) 1 Cor. 2:14] The crucified Christ is "an offense to the Jews and foolishness to the Greeks".45) 1 Cor. 1:23] "The imagination of the human heart is evil from its youth."

46] [46] Gen. 8:21] How can this state of the natural human heart lead to the cooperation required by the Arminian Reformed for the attainment of faith and salvation? Truly, all who place themselves before the door of heaven with this demand, erect, as much as is in them, a firm blockade against the heaven opened by Christ.

We now come to the saddest event in the history of the Church and the world in recent centuries. Through Luther's ministry, God gave back to the Church the heaven opened by Christ, which had been closed to poor sinners for so long by the Pope's doctrine of works. Luther proclaimed with a strong voice to the church and the world that although all men were condemned to death and eternal damnation by God's holy law, there was also a gospel of God in the Holy Scriptures, alongside the law of God, which made known to men that, for the sake of the satisfaction that Christ made to the law of God, heaven was open to all men without their own worthiness or works. Luther says: "Thus the Gospel of God and the New Testament is a good story and cry, heard throughout the world through the apostles, of a true David, who fought with sin, death and the devil and overcame them, and thus redeemed, justified, made alive and saved all those who were trapped in sin, afflicted with death, overcome by the devil, without their merit, and thus satisfied them and brought them back to God."47) [47) St. L. XIV, 86] Furthermore: God "has given us the gospel, in which is pure forgiveness, before we asked for it or ever thought of it".48) [48) Large Catechism; M., p. 478, 88] Luther calls the interference of human merit and works in the opening of heaven "an intolerable and terrifying blasphemy against God", because we know from Holy Scripture "that God cannot be reconciled in any other way than through this immeasurable and infinite treasure, namely through the death and blood of his Son; for one drop of the same is more precious than all creation".49) [49) On Gal. 2:20. St. L. IX, 237 f.] In agreement with this, Luther says of the attempt to supplement Christ's work of reconciliation through human activity and human works — a "nuisance" that should be dismissed from the church.50) [50) op. cit., 236] But unfortunately, it cannot be denied that this offense was already stirring in the midst of the Lutheran Church during Luther's lifetime and openly raised its head soon after Luther's death — in Wittenberg itself. The later Melanchthon, formerly a faithful assistant to Luther, taught and found followers for his doctrine that the Holy Spirit and the effect of the Holy Spirit in the Gospel of grace were not sufficient to convert a person to God, but that man's own will, which was directed to God's grace,

had to be added as a third cause (*facultas applicandi se ad gratiam*) ["the ability to apply oneself to grace"]. Thank God, the Formula of Concord removed this offense from the Lutheran Church and restored the open heaven, whereby Christ's doctrine of salvation is violated and people's salvation is based on their own actions. Nonetheless, this offense continued to resurface within the Lutheran Church. The German theologians of the nineteenth century, who are regarded in wider circles as representatives of Lutheran theology, almost generally do not follow the paths of Luther and the Lutheran Church, but follow in the footsteps of the later Melanchthon. They believe they must teach that man's conversion and salvation ultimately rest on man himself, on his right conduct, his self-decision or self-determination to accept grace. God's grace accompanies man to the door of heaven. Then it leaves people to their own devices. Man must open the door himself.51) [51) The evidence in *Christl. Dogmatik* II, notes 1296, 1317] Thus German neo-Lutheran theology. But within the American Lutheran Church in particular, "by grace alone" was also fought against and rejected with great seriousness. In this country it was not only taught that conversion and salvation depended on the right conduct of man, but it was also added that whoever did not teach this, but attributed conversion and salvation to the grace of God alone, was mistaken in the foundation of faith, was a false teacher, a wolf in sheep's clothing, a Calvinist.52) [52) The evidence in "Zur Einigung"[2], p. 24] Those who fought us so earnestly in this country in the doctrine of conversion and election of grace, truly stood before the door of heaven opened by Christ with the demand, which has been summarized briefly but quite correctly as follows: Admission only on the basis of right human behavior, no admittance except on good behavior. One objected: We do not mean right behavior per se, but only comparatively. We only mean that those who want to go to heaven must show less reluctance and less guilt compared to those who are not converted and saved. But if we argue in this way, we make it all the more obvious that we are practicing the exclusion of heaven. For it is precisely with the comparatively better behavior and the comparatively lesser guilt that we ascribe to ourselves that we enter the order of the Pharisees, who go down to their house unjustly,53) [53) Luk 18:14] that is, exclude themselves from heaven as long as they remain members of the order. For this is how the Savior describes the thoughts of a Pharisee: "I thank you, God, that I am not like other people: robbers, unjust, adulterers or even like this tax collector." Luther uses strong language in relation to wanting to be comparatively better, language that offends our civilized

ears. Luther calls it a "secret" and "abominable treachery" of the devil when someone lifts himself up in his heart before God even above a harlot. Luther literally says: "God forbids you to exalt yourself above any harlot, even if you were Abraham, David, Peter or Paul." 54) [54) St. L. XI, 515] The scholarly oracle of his time, Erasmus of Rotterdam, in his writing *De Libero Arbitrio* (1524) wanted to persuade Luther that he (Luther) should not attribute the attainment of salvation entirely to God's grace, but rather make a compromise and include human good behavior, the facultas applicandi se ad gratiam, in the way of salvation alongside God's grace. Luther replied in his *De Servo Arbitrio* (1525): Jugulum petisti, You are at my throat,55) [55) Opp. v. a. VII, 367] that is, you want to rob me of "by grace alone" and thereby close to me the heaven opened by Christ.

Venerable fathers and brothers! In this way we have demonstrated to ourselves in a few key points how people close heaven to themselves, which is open to all people through Christ's atoning sacrifice. May God's grace save us from closing heaven to ourselves in every form!

No more, because: My dear Lord,
Your death will be my life,
You paid for me!

Just as I am, without one plea
But that Thy blood was shed for me
And that Thou bidst me come to Thee,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come. **F. P.**

III.

Finally, we ask: What can and should we do so that, as far as it is up to us, heaven, opened through Christ, remains open to men? The answer is clear from what we have said so far.

First of all, we have seen that it is not a man-made doctrine, but God's own teaching, revealed in his Word and on the basis of this Word also attested in our Lutheran Confessions, that God has reconciled the whole human world to himself through the vicarious life, suffering and death of his incarnate Son, and that heaven is thereby open to all people without exception. We must teach and confess this truth clearly and tirelessly. On the other hand, we saw how people themselves close the door to an open heaven. In particular, we had to realize that not only Rome, through its openly expressed doctrine of works, but also the so-called Protestant camp practiced the closure of heaven. Among the Calvinist Reformed this is done by limiting the reconciliation that has taken place through Christ to about twenty percent of the people. The Arminian Reformed and the derailed Lutherans do this by only wanting to let people into heaven who, in addition to God's grace, also have their own good behavior as a saving and decisive factor. In this situation, it is our task to hold fast to both universal grace (*universalis gratia*) and grace alone (*sola gratia*) against all human objections. This is what the fathers of our Synod have done before us, by God's grace. By God's grace, we must do the same if we want to be their true children and rightly bear the name "Lutheran".

In 1863, the Reformed theologian Emil Wilhelm Krummacher wrote an article in the Reformed Erlangen "Kirchenzeitung" entitled: "Why we are not Lutheran, but Reformed." German Reformed church newspapers in the United States printed Krummacher's

article. They wanted to use it to propagandize for the Reformed Church against the Lutheran Church in this country. Against this attack, an article appeared in the ninth volume of *Lehre und Wehre* (1863) under the heading: "Some Remarks on a New Apology of the Reformed Church." This article, written by Dr. Walther, extends through four issues of *L. u. W.* (vol. 9, Sept. to Dec. 1863) and is, incidentally, one of the most thorough refutations of the entire Reformed doctrine, insofar as it differs from the Lutheran doctrine.

Of course, the doctrine of conversion and election of grace is also dealt with in this dispute with the Reformed Church. And two things are held up as Lutheran doctrine against the Reformed licentiate who wants to conquer the Lutheran Church: unrestricted universal grace, *universalis gratia*, and unrestricted grace alone, *sola gratia*. Why is the affirmation of both truths necessary? Humans have become quite strange people since the Fall. Although they still know that there is a God, they do not want to believe God's revealed Word. In these days we have again convinced ourselves that God's Word teaches both: the *universalis gratia* and the *sola gratia*. But we super-smart people consider it an unbearable imposition, to be rejected with indignation, to believe both. Calvinists take the liberty of concluding that if we are to believe that God saves people "by grace alone", we must necessarily abandon the idea that God wants to save all people. There is no room for both in the human mind. Likewise, the Arminian Reformed and the derailed Lutherans allow themselves the conclusion that if one is to believe in universal grace, then one must necessarily abandon "by grace alone" and teach that man's conversion and salvation are not decisively based on God's grace, but on man's friendly response to the gospel (*facultas applicandi se ad gratiam*). Walther opposes both false conclusions in his article against Krummacher and points out that the Lutheran Church in its Confessions believes God in his Word, namely that it holds both side by side and together: the general and the sole grace of God. The contradiction that limited human reason finds here, however, is only an apparent one whose solution will be found in the light of glory. God's Word does not go beyond Hos. 13:9: Israel, thou art destroyed, the iniquity is thine; but that thou mayest be saved, it is my mercy. Dr. Walther says literally:56) [56) This quotation was not read out in the lecture, which was limited in time]. "The Calvinists conclude: If God

has chosen a number of people for salvation out of free grace, and if he alone does everything to bring them to faith, to keep them in faith and finally to make them saved, without them contributing the slightest thing to it, then of course, since all men by nature lie in the same ruin, it must be up to God alone that the others do not come to faith or do not remain in it and are not saved but damned. ... And it is certainly true that unenlightened reason, that is, reason that does not follow the Word [of God], cannot do otherwise; reason, if it does not inquire into Scripture and follow its own thoughts, must come to this conclusion. But not our dear Formula of Concord and with it the whole orthodox Lutheran Church. It does not draw this conclusion. It maintains that the reason why people are saved is solely due to God's free grace, whereas the reason why people are damned is solely due to human sin and guilt. … Since both are written in God's Word, that God has chosen the elect only according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of his glorious grace from eternity, and that the reprobate, while God desires the salvation of all men, are rejected because of their own sin and guilt, believe, the Formula of Concord teaches and confesses both, does not build a bridge of reason with the Calvinists over the yawning abyss of this inexplicable mystery, leaves both and humbly worships God in his incomprehensible wisdom, awaiting the solution of this apparent contradiction in eternal life."57) [57) *L. u. W.* IX, 298 f.] In particular, Walther also points out this very important truth in this article: He who has not yet learned to hold both — universal grace and grace alone — unreservedly side by side and together, has not yet passed the last necessary test of his ability to teach within the Christian Church.58) [58) Ibid. p. 297] For both are needed by every man whose conscience is rightly struck by the condemnatory judgment of the divine law, if he is not to perish in despair. This was explained in more detail in the second lecture.

About eight years after the rejection of the Reformed attack on universal grace, there was a public attack on "grace alone" from the Lutheran Church in America, with a vehemence surpassing all previous ones, as has already been noted. It was asserted in often repeated expressions and phrases and presented as a Lutheran doctrine: man's conversion and salvation stand on man's right behavior, namely on man's self-decision to accept grace. Man's eternal destiny is rooted in man's right self-decision. God lets it depend on man's own decision

whether he will have mercy on man.59) [59) Monatshefte 1872, p. 87. 88] It was also added that the Missouri Synod, which did not want to accept this doctrine as Lutheran, had become Calvinistic, that is, had fallen away from the general grace of God, just as Luther had denied general grace until about the year 1527, especially in his work Wider Erasmus (Against Erasmus).60) [60) Monatshefte 1872, p. 21] This challenge to "grace alone" from the Lutheran camp was answered by *Lehre und Wehre* in the 18th volume (1872) in an article under the heading: "Is it really Lutheran doctrine that man's salvation is ultimately based on his own free decision?". This article, also written by Dr. Walther, is very detailed. It extends through six issues of *Lehre und Wehre* (July to December 1872) and explains in detail that, according to the teaching of Holy Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions, man's conversion and salvation depend not only in part or even for the most part, but on God's grace alone, and the contrary assertion that God's will of grace and God's will of salvation depend on God's grace alone, that God's will of grace and God's mercy towards man is conditioned by man's good behavior, transforms the article of God's grace in Christ into an empty phrase and lets it "go up in smoke", thus closing to man the heaven open through Christ.61) [61) L. u. W. 1872, p. 322 ff., 329]

Dr. Walther is very reserved, mild and friendly in his judgment of the real position of his opponents' hearts. 62) [62) op. cit. p. 329] He accepts the possibility that they are on the "dangerous wrong path", "without wanting to", indeed that they are presenting a doctrine which, insofar as they are Christians, they themselves do not believe. Luther also points out in his essay against Erasmus that such strange things also occur among Christians. Erasmus accused Luther of saying that "saints", that is, people to whom Luther did not deny the Christian faith, still attributed free will to man in spiritual matters. Luther replied: "They did indeed do so, but only *inter disputandum*, that is, when they argued before men. But when they went before God in prayer, they completely forgot (*penitus*) their free will in spiritual matters, despaired of themselves, and implored for themselves "only the pure grace" of God (*solam et puram gratiam*).63) [63) St. L. XVIII, 1729. Opp. v. a. Erl. VII, 166 f.] But although Walther also gives credit for this inconsistency to the opponents of the Missouri Synod, he remains firm, like steel and diamond, in his judgment and condemnation of the opposing doctrine that God's grace and mercy are dependent on human good behavior. He describes this doctrine as a counter-reformation rising within the Lutheran Church. He

writes in the same year's L. u. W.:64) [64) L. u. W. 1872, p. 352] "A theology that makes faith man's own act and seeks the reason why certain people are saved while others are lost in their free personal decision, in their behavior, in their participation, differs from the Roman doctrine of justification only in its terminology," i.e., not in substance, but only in expression. Just as Walther, now sixty-seven years ago, relegated the theology that places salvation on man's good behavior to the Roman camp, so did Martin Chemnitz, the main author of the Formula of Concord, 351 years ago at the colloquium in Herzberg. The text of our Formula of Concord was already available in 1577. The Formula of Concord teaches that those who are saved must acknowledge the same guilt and the same evil behavior on their part as those who are lost. Otherwise they would be in apostasy from the Christian doctrine of grace. When, at the Herzberg Colloquy in August 1578, the Anhalt delegate declared that, following the example of the later Melanchthon, he wanted to stick to different human behavior as the reason for conversion and salvation, Chemnitz finally called out to him: "So send your confession of free will to Andradius in Spain, to Tiletanus in Louvain; indeed, send it to Rome, and the Pope himself will approve it." And even before that, at the Colloquy, Chemnitz broke out in complaint: "It is a pity that we have been debating for so long and that no distinction is made between our [Lutheran] and the papists' doctrine of free will." 65) [65) The Acts of the Colloquy, reprinted in *L. u. W.* 28, 452. 449] Thus God has also given the Lutheran Church of America, which he has graciously led back to the doctrine of the Church of the Reformation, the task of opposing a Counter-Reformation, that is, a return to the Roman camp, which has arisen here under the Lutheran name and is still at work. For Walther is absolutely right when he says that a theology which seeks the reason why certain people are saved while others are lost in their free personal decision, in their behavior, in their participation, differs from the Roman doctrine of justification only in its terminology. Thus, even where this theology is put into practice, its effect can only be Roman, namely doubt and despair about God's grace and thus the closure of heaven.

Every chain, as Dr. Walther used to remind us, is only as strong as its weakest link. Let us imagine: A chain would have a dozen links (left). Eleven of them would be so strong that you could hang a thousand pounds from it without fear of the chain breaking. But one link, the weak one in the dozen, could

withstand only ten pounds of strain. The result would be that the durability of the whole chain would be reduced to ten pounds. Let us apply this to the chain of salvation. The chain forged by God for our salvation is strong, very strong. It can carry heaven and earth and the whole of humanity. It is the eternal mercy of God in Christ for the lost world of sinners. It is the eternal mercy that surpasses all thought; it is the open arms of love of the One who leans towards sinners. The links of the heavenly chain are: God's reconciliation of the whole human world with himself through the atoning sacrifice of his incarnate Son. And as a consequence of this: not merely a human message, but God's own message of the reconciliation that has taken place in the means of grace that he himself has ordained, namely the word of the gospel and the sacraments, Baptism and the Lord's Supper; furthermore, the divine effect of the Holy Spirit for the production and preservation of faith in the hearts of men, whereby the hearts are founded on the rock foundation of the divine promises of grace. "The mountains shall be removed, and the hills shall fall, but my mercy shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord thy mercy." 66) [66) Isa. 54:10] But now — O pity! — people have come up with the idea of improving the divine chain of grace by inserting human good behavior. But what about human good behavior towards the gospel? How many pounds of burden can it carry? Neither ten pounds, nor one pound, nor a thousandth part of a pound. Why? Human good behavior toward the gospel and the work of the Holy Spirit in the gospel does not exist; it is a human imagination. For thus Scripture teaches, as we have already heard: "The natural man hears nothing of the Spirit of God; it is foolishness to him, and he cannot discern it." 67) [67) 1 Cor 2:14] The crucified Christ, that is, the opening of heaven through the crucified Christ, is "an offense to the Jews and foolishness to the Greeks".68) [68) 1 Cor 1:23] According to this, there is no good behavior in any human being compared to the grace acquired by Christ and offered in the means of grace. If this product of human imagination is now inserted into the divine heavenly chain, then the teaching and preaching are as follows: There is a grace of God, but only for those people who exhibit the right behavior. God's mercy is certainly there, but it is dependent on man's own free decision. The Son of Man has come to seek and save that which is lost, but this is conditional on the right behavior of the lost. The Gospel, Baptism and the Lord's Supper are indeed ordained by God as a means of forgiveness of sins, but are conditional on right human behavior (conduct). Thus right human conduct, by which God's heavenly

chain is to be improved and enriched, interposes itself like a monster between the gracious God and us poor sinners, and actually pushes aside the one mediator between God and man, who gave Himself for all for salvation. Hence Luther's cry of pain when Erasmus urged him to insert the right behavior of man, man's ability to incline himself to grace, the *facultas applicandi se ad gratiam*, into the heavenly chain — hence Luther's cry of pain: "You have gone for my throat", you want to strangle me!

Hence Dr. Walther's earnest words at the dedication of our seminary building on Jefferson Avenue in 1883: He wished that the majestic and graceful building would sooner sink into dust and ashes than that the doctrine of grace would be falsified and truth and error would be taught or tolerated side by side. It was in the same spirit that we opened the numerous new buildings on the new square on De Mun Avenue three years ago. And this is true of all the synodical buildings in all the seminaries and all the colleges in this country and abroad. May they rather become ruins than places in which the Christian doctrine of grace is touched and thereby the entrance to heaven is barred to souls who have been bought by Christ for heaven. And as for our synodical periodicals, may this be the last number of the *Lutheraner* and *Lehre und Wehre* and also of the *Lutheran Witness* and the *Theological Monthly*, in which, besides the truth, errors are also taught, especially the seductive error that man's conversion and salvation stand not only on God's grace in Christ, but also on man's good behavior, an error which, by its nature, as we have seen, closes to every sinner the heaven open through Christ. May God grant us grace to overcome victoriously all temptations to allow room for this error!

Venerable fathers and brothers! Let me point out in a few words what is and is not proper for those who, by God's grace, teach and believe in the heaven open through Christ. There is no need for many words, because the matter is self-evident. We, who by faith see heaven open, should be diligent, very diligent, in proclaiming the open heaven. When the time had come, our Savior rushed, as it were, to Jerusalem to suffer and die and thereby open heaven to the whole world.69) [69) Mark 10:32] So we should not be lax in spreading the message of the open heaven, but rush out into the world with it, as it were. Our Savior's express command in the words: "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature!" also applies to this. For preaching the gospel is nothing

other than preaching the open heaven through Christ. Those of us who teach and believe in the open heaven can therefore not even think of limiting the training of preachers and teachers; on the contrary, we must increase in it. Our Savior expressly admonishes us: "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send laborers into his harvest!"70) [70) Matt. 9:37-38] Let us not forget, especially in the recent times, a word of our Savior that he spoke to his disciples at Jacob's well, John 4:35: "Lift up your eyes and look into the field, for it is already white for harvest." Let us think of India, for example, where God has sent not just a few hundred Samaritans, but hundreds of thousands of Indians to come to us and ask for workers. Truly, in this state of affairs, holy zeal and God-pleasing enthusiasm are appropriate for us. But we also see something among us that does not befit those of us who see heaven open. This is a deficit in our missionary funds and our synodical funds in general. The open heaven and deficits in our kingdom funds do not go together. The means by which we can eliminate this impropriety is known to us all. We need only think of heaven, which is open to us through the blood and death of our dear Savior and which we already possess by faith. Then our love for our Savior and for service in his kingdom will be rekindled again and again. May God grant us all grace to remember the open heaven, not just occasionally, but daily! Amen.

Lehre und Wehre.

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Christianity as a Religion of the Hereafter. ^

(Lectures before the Delegate Synod A. D. 1920 by F. Pieper).

At your request, venerable Fathers and Brothers, I submit to you a few brief lectures on Christianity as a religion of the hereafter. The expression "religion of the hereafter" has come into fairly general use in our time. We understand by it the kind of Christian religion known to every Christian, according to which the hope of Christians is not for this temporal life, but for a life after this life, for an eternal life in heaven. "Heaven is my Home." We understand this to be the kind of Christianity that the Holy Scriptures describe with the words: "We have no lasting city here, but we are looking for the one to come", Hebrews 13:14.

The topic is prompted by the present. In Protestant Christianity, especially in our country, a powerful movement has begun that wants to either completely eliminate the hereafter, heaven and hell, from the Christian religion or at least push it out of the dead track. They want to turn the Christian Church into a reform school for this life, under the pretext that they are pressing for the very essence, “the essential feature, the main idea”, of Christianity and have the best interests of the church and humanity in mind. By transforming the gospel of Christ into a "*social* gospel", it is hoped that the whole world can be won over to Christianity in a short time.

Perhaps we can usefully address this topic in the following five sections:

1. The description of the modern religion of this world in contrast to the Christian religion.

2. The Christian religion is essentially a religion of the hereafter; nevertheless, indeed precisely because of this, it exerts the greatest influence on life in this world.

3. The religion of the hereafter and the missionary activity of the Christian Church.

4. The religion of the hereafter and the administration of the public preaching ministry.

5. The maintenance of our connection between this world and the hereafter.

I.

Today we turn our attention to the first point. Let us visualize the actual form of the religion of this world, which so impetuously demands our recognition and wants to conquer the world in a short time. In its outward form it is initially quite different from other attacks on the Christian Church. The obvious unbelievers and mockers of all times have issued the slogan: "Away with the Christian Church from this world! The sooner, the better for mankind!" The pagans of Rome once shouted at the Christians: Non licet vos esse, you are not allowed to exist. A Voltaire wrote: ″Ecrasez l'infame", get rid of the shameful thing, Christianity and the Christian Church, out of the world! A Vogt and an Ingersoll have openly declared their support for the same endeavors. But our American representatives of this world's religion speak quite differently. They praise the Christian Church. They pay it the greatest compliments. They call the Christian Church the greatest treasure in the world. The Christian religion alone can save mankind and make it happy. But the Church must give its activities a different goal than before. It should not emphasize the "*hereafter*", heaven and hell and the *creeds* that are connected with them, or at least leave them alone. The Christian Church must concentrate its activity on this world; it must allow the problems of civil, industrial, national and international life etc. to come to the fore and thereby create a heaven on earth for humanity. The fraudulent field cry is: "Deeds, not creeds." This is also called "practical" or "applied" Christianity, "applied Christianity", "the social gospel". There is also talk of "*a broader* conception of religion, an *expansion* of religion".

Here is some evidence of this. A veritable flood of writings with this content has poured over our country. I quote from *The Expansion of Religion,* written by Winchester Donald, Rector of Trinity Church in the City of Boston, which appeared as early as 1896. Donald, too, does not want to eliminate the Christian Church from the world, but praises it highly. It is just that the Christian Church has not yet understood its task properly. Too much emphasis had been placed on Christian doctrine.

In particular, too much emphasis has been placed on the doctrine of justification, namely the doctrine that man is justified before God, not through his own righteousness, but through faith in Christ's substitutionary satisfaction. As a result, Christian faith was the main thing for the church. Of course, life on earth was also emphasized as important, but only as secondary. Heaven always came first. This had given the Christian Church too strong a focus on the hereafter. Donald literally says: "The Christian religion seemed concerned only with the life that is to come, and bent only on getting men through this world in any sort of fashion, because the other world is the only one of any importance." Because of this strong emphasis on the world to come, the masses of the people, whose desire and activity were known to be directed towards this world, kept themselves apart from the church. In order to gain influence over the masses of the people, the Christian religion would have to adopt a new definition of righteousness before God. The new definition must be that the righteousness of life is the only reason why a person is considered righteous before God. "Integrity of life is the only legitimate ground for believing that a man is justified before his God." If this definition of righteousness before God is accepted, namely that man must stand before God with his own righteousness, then the Christian religion automatically takes the right direction towards this life. The city of Boston would then appear as important as heaven, and the Christian religion would become attractive to the masses of the people. Literally, Donald says: "Because religion now considers Boston as important as the New Jerusalem, because it appropriates, almost literally, the vision of St. John, who saw the New Jerusalem coming down from heaven, … now religion has made itself attractive, attractive by its usefulness to civil life here on earth." He adds: "The old question whether religion should have anything to do with politics ceases to be a question; for politics is religion, and religion is politics, because both struggle for the same ideal of producing political justice and just politics."

In recent times, the [John D.] Rockefeller Jr. in particular has sought to spread the same view of the task of the Christian Church in beautifully printed and freely distributed pamphlets throughout the country. Rockefeller also praises the Christian Church. He sees it as the only hope for mankind. But he also calls the Church silent about the hereafter, about heaven and hell, and gives it a merely

this-worldly goal. In his writing on the church as it should be in the future *(The Christian Church; What of Its Future?),* he declares all creeds to be non-essential. One should not even ask about faith when being accepted into the Christian Church. He calls interest in creeds and the "hereafter" worthless "theoretical religion". Instead, the church should focus on "its sympathetic interest in all the great problems of human life, in social and moral problems, those of industry and business, in civic and educational problems". [p. 12]

Since the war, however, the movement to turn the Christian Church into an institute of this world and for this world has gained in scope and strength. Last year, a bishop of the Episcopal Church in this city (Detroit) criticized the church's intention to save souls. Christ himself was not really concerned with saving souls. Therefore, the actual task of the Christian Church was to establish the kingdom of heaven on earth, "to fight all injustice and sin, individual or social".

Unfortunately, this religion of this world has also penetrated circles in our country that call themselves Lutheran. A pamphlet was published by the Merger Synods and on behalf of the National Lutheran Commission for Soldiers' and Sailors' Welfare, in which returning soldiers are encouraged to serve in the church, especially in the preaching ministry. Here, however, the hereafter is not so explicitly set aside. But just as little is it clearly stated here that the actual task of the Christian Church is to save souls from hell to heaven. Rather, it is said as if there has not yet been a kingdom of God on earth because the Church has not yet eliminated injustice and evil from civil, business and national life. It is not exactly said that all creeds are to be set aside as unessential, but such Unitarian phrases are used which set aside the redemption of mankind through the atoning blood of Christ and refer to a universal religion. It literally says: "Christianity seeks to recreate the human race and to weld it together into a universal brotherhood, united in the universal fatherhood of God." It is therefore not surprising that hundreds of Lutheran pastors, especially from the Merger Synods, have publicly declared their support for the "Interchurch World Movement". This movement has decisively removed all unity in Christian doctrine from its program and in its place has set itself the goal of spreading so-called Christian civilization.

Thus the sad fact confronts us all too clearly that the majority of so-called Protestant Christianity is endeavoring

to turn the Christian religion into a religion of this world. Here we are confronted with an attack on the Christian Church which must be called satanic in the most eminent sense. Under the name of the Christian Church we are dealing with a complete reversal of Christianity. The Holy Scriptures admonish Christians not to forget that we have no lasting city here on earth, but that we are looking for the one to come. These people exhort to the contrary: Forget the city which is to come! Scripture calls out to Christians (Col. 3:2): "Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth!" These people turn it around and say: "Seek the things that are on earth; leave the things that are above alone. Christ comforts Christians here on earth with heaven (John 14:1 ff.): "Let not your heart be troubled!" "In my Father's house are many mansions." "I am going to prepare a place for you. And if I go to prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to myself, that you may be where I am." These people say: Forget the dwellings in the Father's house; the New Jerusalem is here in this world, in Boston and in other places. Christ also makes a powerful reference to hell. He speaks warningly to us all (Matt. 16:26): "For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" (namely from hell)? So that we may avoid hell and escape from it, he pronounces the admonition that penetrates through marrow and bone: "If your hand or your foot offends you, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to be lame or crippled for life than to have two hands or two feet and be thrown into the eternal fire. And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee. It is better for you to enter life with one eye than to have two eyes and be thrown into the fire of hell," Matt. 18:8-9. And these people want to have the subject of hell cast aside as an obsolete one!

Where is the basic harm? These people give the impression that they really mean what they say. Where are they lacking? Where do they get the really great idea of wanting to bring and reform the Christian Church so that it remains silent about heaven and hell? This is because they are still living in carnal security for themselves without true knowledge of sin. Their conscience has not yet awakened. They still lack the realization that they, like all people, have a guilt of sin before God, a guilt that automatically pushes them down to hell, to eternal damnation. They talk a lot about "sin". They say: "Sin is all about us and shames us." But by "sin" they think only of the harm that sin does here in this life: in civil life, that one takes away another's good name; in

business life, that one seeks to defraud another; in national and international life, that one people seeks to oppress another. But they lack, or rather they suppress in themselves, the realization that every sin we humans commit not only causes harm here in the world, but first and foremost registers a debt before God in heaven, a debt before God that mocks all human attempts at progress, which we humans are just as little, indeed even less, able to remove as we are able to move the Rocky Mountains or the Himalayas from their place. Because these people lack this realization, they also declare the "creeds" to be "non-essential", especially the belief that Christ is the Son of God and has closed hell and bought heaven through his merit. In short, the situation is this: Whoever is not yet seriously afraid of hell because of his sins does not care about heaven either. But he who has recognized his guilt of sin before God and is terrified of hell wants above all to have the question answered as to how he can escape hell and be saved, that is, how he can get to heaven. All the things of this life seem trivial to him in comparison. As long as the jailer of Philippi had not yet recognized his guilt of sin before God, the gospel, the dogma (creed) of the forgiveness of sins for the sake of Christ, was not only non-essential to him, but he also threw the preachers of the gospel into the innermost prison with obvious pleasure. But when he was terrified of God's wrath because of his sin — terrified of hell — the dogma of Christ became very "essential" to him. He fell at the feet of Paul and Silas and said: "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" And when he had received the answer: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house", and the Holy Spirit had worked faith in this answer in his heart, he did not throw the preachers of the dogma of the Savior of sinners back into the stocks, but led them into his house and set a table for them, rejoicing with his whole household that he had become a believer in God. In short, the knowledge of sin, namely the knowledge that sin is first and foremost guilt before God, saves us from the attempt to push the creeds of Christ's person and work and of heaven and hell into the background and to want to turn Christianity into a religion of this world.

May God preserve our Synod and each of us in a twofold personal realization: 1. In the knowledge that every transgression of the divine law in thought, word or deed brings with it a guilt which, according to the clear verdict of the divine law, subjects us to the eternal wrath of God. 2. May He preserve in us the awareness that God will not condemn any sinner, but for Christ's sake desires to take all men and each of us to heaven, and that every

person who trusts in Christ's righteousness can and should speak in faith: Thanks be to God, I have a home in heaven through my dear Savior, "Heaven is my home," and there, there alone, is my mind, no matter where my earthly home is in the United States or anywhere else on earth.

(To be continued.)

II.

Christianity is essentially a religion of the hereafter; nevertheless, indeed precisely because of this, it exerts the greatest influence on life in this world.

We begin with a confession. We confess a weakness that still clings to the Christian life here on earth. When asked whether our hope is directed towards this world or towards heaven, we answer without hesitation: "Towards heaven." At the same time, however, we know and do not hesitate to confess that in the practice of life our heavenly home easily and often recedes into the background. By nature, that is, by their innate sinful nature, all people are earthly-minded. And this mindset is also still constantly present in righteous Christians, provided they still have the old nature about them. If we were always and fully aware of our eternal heavenly home, the suffering of this time would make very little impression on us. Nor would we unduly value the good days and the goods of this world. But we do not always rejoice: "Jerusalem, you city built on high, would to God I were in you." In this respect, things are very miserable for us. We hear these strange words from Luther: "If we want to confess otherwise, we must confess, we seldom consider that we must ultimately leave this and this life behind and resign ourselves to it, knowing where we would like to stay." 1)

1) St. L. IX, 938, from Luther's powerful sermon "Of our blessed hope" on Titus 2:13.

But it does not help: all Christians must suppress and fight the worldly mindset that still stirs in them. They must, as Luther adds, learn daily "the Christian art and right masterpiece",

"to turn their backs on this present life, as that which is passing away, and to always keep that future life in view, to hope firmly and certainly from it, as that which remains eternal and to which we belong". Those who do not learn this and learn it anew every day are in danger of losing their knowledge of Christ and the articles of Christian doctrine. With regard to this point, Luther says: "Whoever does not direct and send his heart into that imperishable life and remains attached only to this temporal, transitory life does not understand what Baptism, the Gospel, Christ and faith are."

There is no exaggeration in these words of Luther. Let us briefly visualize this in the main articles of Christian doctrine. The Person of our Savior already points to heaven. According to his Person, Christ is not merely of this earth. He is not merely a wise man like Socrates or Plato, for example. Socrates and Plato also gathered pupils and disciples around them from this earth. But their mastery and discipleship came to an end when they died. Christ is also not just a powerful earthly ruler like Alexander of Macedonia. Alexander lived 33 years in this world. Then he died and his empire came to an end. In contrast, Christ in his Person is both true man, born of the Virgin Mary, and true God, born of the Father in eternity. He is the eternal Son of God. He came down from heaven to this earth and also lived on this earth for 33 years. But he used these 33 years to prepare eternal dwellings in heaven for mankind. He then returned to heaven and will have all those who believe in him with him eternally in heaven. Furthermore, Christ's entire work is geared towards heaven.

What did Christ do on earth? We know this very clearly from Scripture. He fulfilled the divine law in the place of man, which we humans have not kept and cannot keep. Then he allowed himself to be crucified. Why this action and suffering? Not — as Luther aptly puts it — to deliver us humans from earthly fire and earthly floods of water, but to save us from the eternal fire of hell and the eternal floods of God's wrath. This is how his wonderful high priestly work goes out into the hereafter. His royal work is also entirely focused on the hereafter. Of course, he now also reigns on earth. He rules the universe. He has seated himself at the right hand of God. But he rules heaven and earth for the purpose of gathering a church on earth for heaven through the preaching of the gospel. When the gathering is complete, he visibly returns to the Last Judgement, causes heaven and earth to pass away and takes his Church to himself in the eternal dwellings of heaven. The means of grace ordained by Christ are also designed for the hereafter: the

Word of the Gospel and the Sacraments of Holy Baptism and Holy Communion. The Gospel, which Christ himself preached and then commanded his Church to preach on earth, is not merely "social gospel", but the good news of the payment of our sin debt through the blood of Christ, the good news of the forgiveness of our sins and thus the good news of our eternal salvation. It is the same with our Baptism. As Peter says on the first day of Pentecost, it is "for the forgiveness of sins" (Acts 2:38) and thus for heaven. Luther says very correctly: "We are baptized for eternal life." "As soon as a child is lifted from baptism and put on the vest, it is from that very hour initiated into eternal life, that it may henceforth be only a pilgrim and sojourner in this world for the time of its life, and thus be prepared to leave this temporal life and hope and wait forever for that imperishable life." It is the same with Holy Communion. It is also designed for heaven. We celebrate it according to Christ's order here in this world until Christ returns on the Last Day. But we celebrate it for the assurance of the forgiveness of our sins and thus for the assurance of our entitlement to eternal life. For in Holy Communion we receive with the bread Christ's body, which was given for us, and with the wine Christ's blood, which was shed for us for the forgiveness of sins. But where there is forgiveness of sins, there is also life and salvation. Holy Communion is an image and model of the banquet of joy in eternal life, as Christ says: "I will drink no more of the fruit of the vine, until that day that I drink it new in the kingdom of God." (Mark 14:25) And just as the means of grace aim at heaven, so does the faith of Christians, which is one of the means of grace. The faith of Christians is definitely directed towards heaven, and not only after ten or twenty or thirty or even after sixty or seventy years, but from the very beginning, from the time it was formed in us. St. Paul wrote to the Corinthian Christians as soon as they had become believers in the gospel: "You only wait for the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ, who will also keep you until the end, that you may be blameless until the day of our Lord Jesus Christ." (1 Cor. 1:8) On the basis of Scripture, Christians therefore see their life here on earth as nothing other than a journey, a journey that is directed day by day towards the eternal heavenly home. Here in Detroit during the Synod we are also on a journey to heaven, and if one of us who believe in Christ as our Savior from the guilt of sin should be called away from this life, the soul goes from Detroit directly to paradise. Therefore, the hope

of Christians definitely has the character of the future. It is true that Christians also have a promise for this life. They have the promise: "I am with you always, to the end of the age", Matt. 28:20, "I will never leave you nor forsake you", Heb. 13:5, but the anchor of their hope remains in the hereafter. They do not expect external glory here on earth, but the via dolorosa and via crucis, which their Savior walked here in this life. "We must enter the kingdom of God through much tribulation", Acts 14:22. Our — the Christians' — paradise is not on this earth, neither in America, nor in Europe, nor in Africa, nor in Asia, nor in Australia. Our paradise lies outside of geography, in heaven. It is the heavenly paradise, of which the earthly paradise before the Fall was only a weak model. With a constant view to our heavenly paradise, we also abstain from carnal lusts that fight against the soul, so that we do not miss out on the heavenly paradise.

This is, in brief, the main points of the Christian religion as a religion of the hereafter. All those who want to either completely eliminate the hereafter or relegate it to the background are denying not only a part, but the whole of Christianity. The apostle Paul therefore says of those who deny the resurrection of the dead and thus the hereafter that they have lacked the truth and are shipwrecked in the faith (2 Tim. 2:17 ff.; 1 Tim. 1:19-20). The apostle, burning with holy wrath, also says how he would have treated the people who want to give Christianity an earthly goal under the name of Christianity. He says: "I have delivered them to Satan, that they may be chastened to blaspheme no more." Christians therefore also know what to think of the Interchurch World Movement. This movement wants to degrade the Christian Church into a moral reform school for this life. Someone from sectarian circles rightly gave this verdict on the World Movement: "Another Babylon, more portentous, more mysteriously potent for evil, more daring in blasphemy, more impotent of power to reach up into heaven, is looming large on the horizon, and the Church moves on to its predicted apostasy." In short, it is self-evident to every Christian that the Christian religion is essentially a religion of the hereafter.

But despite this, indeed precisely because of this, it exerts the greatest influence on life in this world. The more certain a person is of his eternal home through faith in the crucified Savior, the more useful, reliable and faithful he is in his professional position here on earth.

It is well known that the opposite has always been said. It has also recently been said again that whoever has his treasure in heaven here on earth neglects the duties of this life. But

this is so senseless and so contrary to all experience that a few months ago the following was even written in a political newspaper 2) [2) Quoted in *L. u. W.* 1920, p. 42 f.]: "There are people who say that we should openly give up the thought of a life after this life, that we should turn our eyes away from a distant future and divert our hearts from spiritual things. The argument is made that the present life has a right to all our thoughts, and that the cultivation of the consciousness of another world weakens our will-power for this world. We are told that those who travel through one country with their hearts set on another country that lies beyond the horizon — that these people make no effort to improve the condition of life in the country through which they are traveling, that if we give up the hope of another life, we give ourselves more to the purpose of making the present world a beautiful heaven. "The argument sounds plausible, but it is utterly baseless." The plain fact is this, that the noblest work for this world is done by those whose hearts are set on another world. Strange as it may seem, the people who are most firmly convinced that there is another and better world are also the most diligent in making this world a decent place to live in." — What is said in these words is still in the realm of natural religion, more precisely, the natural belief in immortality. It becomes truth in the area of the Christian faith revealed in the Holy Scriptures, as St. Paul describes it with the words: "Our state is in heaven, from where we also await the Savior Jesus Christ, the Lord", Phil. 3:20. It says this: The Christian religion of the hereafter carries heavenly power and heavenly splendor into this earthly life and all earthly relationships, which are corrupted and disfigured by sin. Almost the entire world is talking at this time about "social, industrial, national and international problems" that are difficult to solve. The Christian religion solves all these problems precisely because it is the religion of the hereafter. Secular poets have expressed the thought in one form or another: "To the fatherland, to the dear one, attach yourself; there are the roots of your strength." This is true in the secular sphere. Cosmopolitans who do not want a fatherland of their own are intellectually and morally ignorant. The idea of the fatherland reaches its truest truth in the spiritual realm, namely among those who have found connection to the heavenly fatherland through the Gospel. Examples: Marriage is declared to be a difficult problem of our time. One side is not afraid to call marriage "a failure". But there is a solution

to this problem. Those husbands, who have their home in heaven, see it as divine order that they love, honor and nourish their spouse as their own flesh, and the wives, who have their home in heaven, see it as divine order that they in turn love, honor and be subject to their husbands. Everyone must admit that this solves the problem of marriage. And the problem of the relationship between parents and children! Parents who have their home in heaven regard their children as a precious gift from God; they bring them up in discipline and admonition of the Lord and also equip them with the necessary knowledge for this life. The children, who know their home is in heaven, honor and love their parents as God's representatives on earth and are subject to them in all things that are not contrary to God's Word. This solves the family problem and the problem of education! The citizens who have their home in heaven never make revolution, but recognize the existing authority, that is, the authority that actually has the power, as God's order and are subject to it for the sake of conscience in all things that are not contrary to God's Word. They also regard it as divine order that in all things they seek the best interests of the city and the state, where they enjoy civil rights and protection. This truly solves the "national problem". The employers, who have their home in heaven, do not abuse their position to tyrannize over the workers and reduce their just wages, but provide for the welfare of the workers as well as for their own. And the workers who have their home in heaven do not abuse the power that lies in their greater numbers or numerical superiority to tyrannize and harm the employers, but have the welfare of the employers at heart as their own. Here the word of Scripture Eph. 6:7-8 applies: "Consider that you serve the Lord and not men, and know that whatever good thing each one does he will receive from the Lord, whether he is bond or free." This solves the problem of capital and labor, "the social and industrial problem".

Someone may object: But we see that many of those who want to be Christians and have their home in heaven do not act in the way described, but in the opposite way. We reply: Unfortunately, that is true! But this only proves that those who act to the contrary are either hypocrites who do not believe in Christ as the Savior of sinners and therefore have no home in heaven, or, if they are still Christians, in some cases they do not display their true Christian attitude as they should because of the weakness that still clings to them.

Thus the fact remains irrefutable: Christianity

is essentially a religion of the hereafter, but it is precisely as a religion of the hereafter that it exerts the most beneficial influence on this life. The more certain someone is of his home in heaven through faith in the Redeemer from the guilt of sin and death, the more reliable, faithful and diligent he is in the fulfillment of the duties that this earthly life entails. Good works, that is, works that are good not only before men but also before God, are, as Luther reminds us, "done out of heaven", namely out of gratitude for the fact that we have a home in heaven through Christ's vicarious life and death. Luther literally says: "You must have heaven and already be saved before you do good works. Works do not earn heaven, but again [on the contrary], heaven, given by pure grace, puts good works there, without request of merit, only for the benefit of your neighbor and to the glory of God. … Therefore all the life that an orthodox Christian leads after Baptism is no more than a waiting for the salvation that he already has [in faith]." (St. L. XII, 136)

May God also grant us all the grace to prove our faith in our eternal heavenly home through great faithfulness and diligence in good works on earth to the glory of God our Savior!

(To be continued.)

III.

Christians' home in heaven and their missionary activity on earth.

We have already seen that a Christian life here on earth necessarily includes the hope of eternal life. It is inconceivable without this hope. The apostle Paul says of all those who deny the resurrection of the dead to eternal life that they have fallen away from the Christian faith. The personal hope of heaven is a necessary component of personal Christianity. And we do not need this hope only at the hour of our death. We need it beforehand and on a daily basis so that we do not lose our hearts to this world again. It is written like this: The human heart must have something to cling to. If it is not attached to heaven, it is attached to the things of this world. The things of this world — the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life — only have an attraction for us and power over us to the extent that we lose sight of our heavenly inheritance.

But it is not only for ourselves, that is, for our own spiritual life, that we need our heavenly hope. We also need it in order to carry out the work on others and for others, which is our actual Christian vocation here on earth. This is the proclamation of the Gospel in the world or — which is the same thing — missionary activity.

When we ask: Why does Christ still leave his Christians on earth? Why, after they have believed in him, does he not immediately take them to himself in heaven, where they belong by virtue of their faith? Their Savior has a very definite, important work for them on earth.

They, who have their home in heaven, are to lead other people with them to heaven by proclaiming the gospel in the world. They, who have established their connection with heaven, are to convey the connection with heaven to other people through the proclamation of the gospel. May God grant us the grace that we may all recognize this as the real purpose of our life in this world and live our lives accordingly! It is indeed God's will and commandment that every Christian should also show all diligence and faithfulness in the civil profession in which God has placed him and serve in it as if he were serving God himself. No honest civil profession is to be underestimated. Christ also uses this world, the state and civil order, as an external scaffolding for the building of his church. But despite all the work on the outer scaffolding, every Christian should remain clearly aware of his most important and actual task in this world: My Savior has given me a home in heaven, so that by his grace I may take others from this world with me to heaven. By his grace, this is to be the precious spoil of my life on earth. An old Latin proverb says: *Dic cur hic*, tell me what you are here. Applied to the Christian and his Christian profession, the admonition is: Tell me, and tell yourself: Why are you still a citizen of heaven in this world?

The Old Testament prophecy in Isaiah 40:9 says: "Zion, thou preacher" — and this refers to all Christians — "ascend a high mountain! Jerusalem, thou preacher" — and this again refers to all Christians — "lift up your voice with power, lift up and do not be afraid, tell the cities of Judah: Behold, here is your God!" Christ describes the same Christian vocation in the New Testament with the well-known words: "Go into all the world and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." [Matt. 28:19] And that not only the apostles but all Christians until the Last Day are addressed in these words can be seen from the words that the Lord immediately adds: "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." This is why Christ calls Christians the light of the world in Matt. 5:14 and compares them to a city set on a mountain. Yes, indeed! That is the real purpose of a Christian's life in this world.

How unseemly it would be if we were to forget this! That would not correspond at all to the knowledge with which God has equipped us through His Word. We are certain of several facts. Firstly, we are certain that there is an "hereafter" for all people. To deny the hereafter or even to push it into the background is a satanic deception. Every human being who is born into this world never ceases to exist. He exists eternally

either in heaven or in hell. It is useless for a person to protest against his eternal existence and say: I don't want to know anything about heaven and hell. The protest does not change the fact. Even if a person takes his own life, he does not thereby escape existence in an eternal afterlife. Even if he has his body burned in the crematorium according to modern burial methods, he does not thereby cause his destruction for eternity. Even those who have done evil will be resurrected on the Last Day through Christ's omnipotent call. A modern Jew is reported to have shouted into a meeting in fervent hostility to Christ: "If Christ calls the dead out of their graves on the Last Day, then I will remain lying down." On the Last Day, no one will remain lying down, but all who are in the tombs will hear the voice of the Son of God, rise from the dead and then either be eternally blessed or eternally unblessed. This is the first fact that is immovably certain to all Christians from God's Word. Let us face this fact firmly! All people with whom we live together here on earth or with whom we meet while traveling — all of them never cease to exist, but remain for eternity either in blessed light or in utter darkness. The Lord says: "Two will lie on one bed; one will be accepted, the other will be abandoned. Two will grind together; one will be accepted, the other will be forsaken. Two will be in the field; one will be taken and the other left" (Luke 17:34-36). The second fact that is certain for us Christians is that not only some people, but all without exception, have been bought for a blessed eternity through the blood of Christ. There is not the slightest doubt about this either. Christ is the Lamb of God who bears the sin of the world, says the Scripture (John 1:29). And again: Christ is the propitiation for the sin of the whole world (1 John 2:2). And to this we immediately add the third fact, that Christ has ordained and appointed us who believe in his name to serve him — if you will permit the expression — as a "publicizing society" for this wonderful fact: "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him" (John 3:16-17). This is something that has never entered the heart of man (1 Cor. 2:9). But let the world hear this from our mouths. The instruction is as clear and definite as possible: "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark 16:15-16). "What you hear in the ear, preach on

the rooftops" (Matthew 10:27). The world should hear the gospel through us, because it is very close to the world. It is reported that in a university town at Christmas a small circle of believing theological students sat together to contemplate the Christmas message. They talked to each other about "peace on earth". They praised the fact of divine love and divine mercy, that God made his Son man in order to close hell for mankind and prepare a home for them in heaven. A law student was also present. At first he had listened in silence. But when he heard the theological students admiring and praising salvation in Christ, he jumped up in great excitement and said something like: "What, you believe that? And you sit here quietly and do not rush out into the world to proclaim happiness to the unhappy world?" Luther also repeatedly points out that witnessing to the Gospel — whether at home, in the immediate vicinity or far away — is a necessary characteristic of a righteous Christian faith. Luther is not lacking in stern warnings either. He declares the failure of Christians to testify to the Gospel to be nothing less than a contempt for the sweat and blood of their Savior, a contempt that God cannot leave unpunished and usually punishes with the early withdrawal of the Gospel.

We take this to heart. To remind ourselves of our Christian vocation and to strengthen us in practicing it is precisely one of the reasons why we have formed a Synod. It says in our Synodical Constitution, Chapter 1, under "Reasons for the formation of a Synodical Association", § 3: "United expansion of the Kingdom of God, ... missionary work inside and outside the church." Our Concordia Publishing House also has the sole purpose of serving the publication of the Gospel. All other purposes are completely subordinate to this purpose. Of course, the Publishing House also has a business side. But the business is not only partly, but entirely in the service of the fact that we as Christians are called to proclaim the only saving Gospel. We do not print or distribute anything that does not serve this purpose or even hinders it. What serves this purpose, we distribute, even in cases where we cannot expect the publication to pay for itself commercially.

Finally, we should not forget to remember one more fact in this context. We so-called Missourians are under a special obligation in our time. We cannot escape the perception that the gospel of Christ has become rare in the world, and especially in so-called Protestant Christianity here in the United States and

in other countries. The gospel of Christ, the Savior of sinners, has been widely replaced by the Unitarian doctrine that Christ is not the eternal Son of God and therefore not the Savior of men through his vicarious satisfaction (satisfactio vicaria). It is not faith in the vicarious satisfaction of Christ, not trust in the Lamb of God who bore the sins of the world, that makes a person a Christian, but his own virtue or morality inspired by Christ's example. And in recent times, as we have seen, people want to dispense with heaven and hell altogether and turn the Christian Church into merely a reform school for life on earth. Christianity is being transformed into civil morality, culture and civilization. This travesty of Christianity is also penetrating the missions. We recently read an article about the establishment of a missionary school in Natal, Africa. As a "strong feature" of the school to be established, it is emphasized that it intends to train a number of young Zulus as tailors, with the justification: "When the Zulu tribe passes from the state of unclothed savagery to the state of clothed civilization, then native tailors will be at hand to supply the savages with suitable garments." Now it is true that the efforts to provide mankind with suitable clothing are not to be despised. That, to, is an event in human life when a person puts off barbaric clothing and puts on the dress of civilization. But it is strange when the procurement of the garments of civilization is called "a strong feature" of a missionary school and the great main thing in the mission and in human life is not mentioned at all. Scripture says of the rich man that he was well clothed in this life. "He clothed himself in purple and fine linen." But after this life he was in hell and in torment. Therefore, it is and remains the most important event in human life that a person, whether he lives in America or Africa, becomes aware of his nakedness before God, that is, recognizes himself as a lost sinner before God, despairs of all his own righteousness before God and learns to say in faith: "Christ's blood and righteousness, that is my adornment and robe of honor, with which I will stand before God when I enter heaven." In other words: What the world, both civilized and uncivilized, needs above all else is the gospel of the vicarious satisfaction of Christ, through which the righteousness that is valid before God is acquired for all people. And God has given and preserved this gospel to us without our merit. The inheritance has come down to us from our fathers. And we rejoice in this inheritance. None of us in this assembly wants to be without the gospel of the Savior of sinners. Each of us is aware that his salvation and that of the world depends on it.

But the same situation arises that we presented to ourselves in an example from the student circle. Someone could also ask us and exclaim in astonishment: What? You believe this, and yet you are not fired up with the greatest zeal to speak the word of salvation entrusted to you to others near and far? What? You even have a shortage in the missionary funds, in the institutional funds, in the synodical funds and in other funds that serve the gospel, the gospel that the Son of God has prepared with his sweat and blood, through which you yourselves have an eternal home in heaven and through which you can and should lead others to heaven?

Dear fathers and brothers! As a church, we cannot think of disarmament. If we were to undertake even a partial disarmament, as has been thought of here and there, God in his righteous wrath would soon disarm us completely. One thing we should be quite sure of: God's eye is presently on us in the whole world, especially on the Missouri Synod and on those who have the pure gospel with it. As surely as God has blessed us with the knowledge of the gospel, and as surely as the gospel is rare in the world, and as surely as God has left the world standing only for the sake of the preaching of the gospel, so surely God expects us to prove ourselves faithful and zealous preachers of the gospel to the world at this time. But that costs too much money! We must also be careful to save money. What? That costs too much money, on which the Son of God has shed his own blood, on which the eternal welfare of immortal human souls depends, for whose proclamation God leaves us in the world and for whose sake he gives us understanding, gifts and money? It has also been said here and there that perhaps God's judgments on us have already begun. Apparently the former zeal is no longer there. We are also reminded of Luther's words that the Gospel is like a moving rainstorm and usually does not stay in one place for more than an age. Let's stop the comparison with earlier times! That is a chapter in itself, and more could be said about it. But I know how we can escape every impending judgment of God, and you, dear fathers and brothers, know it too and even better than I do. We do this: We repent of all the laxity that has crept into our lives. We ask forgiveness for this for the sake of the blood of Christ and we hereby make a solemn promise before God that, by his grace, we will henceforth prove to be more faithful and diligent preachers of the gospel. We all make this promise, young and old, preachers and teachers and listeners, rich and wealthy and less fortunate. O Lord, help your people, bless your inheritance and let us not be put to shame! Amen.

IV.

The home in heaven and the administration of the public preaching ministry.

We saw that all Christians must keep their eye on their home in heaven, or be oriented toward heaven, if they want to properly direct their Christian calling in this world. The same applies in particular to Christian preachers. At first, this topic sounds as if it should only be dealt with in pastoral conferences and not in a synodical assembly made up of pastors and lay people. But this topic is very close to all Christians, and Christians can and should do a great deal to ensure that God gives the Church the right preachers. We are therefore also dealing with this subject in this meeting and say: A preacher can only fulfill his ministry properly if he works in view of eternity. The ship of hope of a Christian preacher must be firmly anchored in heaven if it is not to be shipwrecked here on earth. The preacher must first of all be certain of his own heavenly home. Then he must constantly recognize and hold fast to the fact that the real task of the preaching ministry is to save souls purchased for heaven by Christ's blood through the public and special proclamation of the Word of God and to save them from the threat of damnation. This is why the apostle Paul, in his pastoral instructions, directs the preachers' gaze so emphatically towards heaven. He calls out to Timothy: "Remember Jesus Christ, who was risen from the dead!" 2 Timothy 2:8 and again: "Fight the good fight of faith, take hold of eternal life! I command you before God, who gives life to all things, and before Christ Jesus, who under Pontius Pilate made a good confession, that you keep the commandment without spot, blameless, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, who will appear in

His time, the Blessed and Only-begotten, the King of kings and Lord of lords." 1 Timothy 6:12-15. And our Savior describes a true preacher as a scribe "instructed unto the kingdom of heaven", Matt. 13:52.

A preacher who is taught for the kingdom of heaven will firstly not falsify God's Word. On the one hand, he will not falsify God's Law. He will not preach as if God, according to His Law, were satisfied with a man's endeavoring to keep as much of God's Law as is in his power, as if "daring to do right" or "trying to keep the commandments" were the way to heaven. This reduction of the divine law is currently spreading like a plague through Protestant Christianity and especially through our country. No, a Christian preacher who has the salvation of souls in mind will proclaim God's Law in all its severity, as Christ expressly demands in Matt. 5, for example. Here Christ threatens that he will deprive any preacher of his share in the kingdom of heaven who allows himself to omit even the smallest letter or tittle of the divine law. The Christian preacher will therefore teach without wavering or yielding: Every man who wants to stand before God on the basis of his own condition and on the basis of his own actions must be completely holy and must have kept God's law perfectly all the days of his life in thought, word and deed. As the apostle Paul calls out in Galatians 3 to every person who thinks of being saved by the law: "Cursed is everyone who does not abide in all things written in the book of the law, that he may do them!" If the pastor preaches the law of God without falsification, he will, as much as is in him, convict all who hear him of the fact that they cannot stand before God with their own righteousness, but must throw themselves into the dust before God as poor sinners who are doomed to the wrath and curse of God, to hell. On the other hand, the preacher who wants to save souls to heaven will not falsify the Gospel, but will proclaim the Gospel taught in the Holy Scriptures in all its purity and sweetness, which is unconditioned by human works. His heart and mouth will overflow with the testimony of the wonderful fact of divine love and divine mercy, namely, the testimony of the fact that a Savior has come from heaven to this earth for mankind, a Savior who, in place of man, has taken both the fulfillment of the divine law and the curse of transgression of the divine law entirely out of himself, out of his own person, and that therefore the door of heaven is wide open for all men. No cherub with a smiting sword, that is, no demand of the law and no curse of the law, now stands at the door of the heavenly paradise. "Christ is the end of the law: he that believeth on him is righteous," Rom. 10:4. "So

then we hold that a man is justified without the works of the law, through faith alone," [Romans 3:28] namely, through faith in him who by his suffering and death closed hell for men and opened heaven wide, wide.

On the other hand: If the Christian preacher holds firmly to the fact that it is the task of his ministry to save souls from this world to heaven, this will prevent him from indifference and unfaithfulness in the execution of his ministry. For what preacher could be undiligent and unfaithful if he remembers that his ministry is about saving heavenly goods purchased by Christ's blood from hell to heaven! The apostle Paul puts this point of view before the pastors of Ephesus when he exhorts them to diligence and faithfulness in their ministry (Acts 20:28): "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, among the which the Holy Ghost hath made you bishops, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood." The apostle also brings this point of view to the attention of his beloved Timothy when he writes to him (2 Tim. 4:1-3): "I testify therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who is to come to judge the living and the dead by his appearing and his kingdom: Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long suffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine."

Thirdly: In the knowledge that the preaching office is not merely to civilize souls, but to save them, the preacher will not allow his office to be made small and unimportant. It is well known that the world often speaks disrespectfully of the preaching ministry. It talks about the "poor preacher" and thinks it is quite all right if a preacher resigns from his office and chooses another, more prestigious position in life. And not only the world, but also Christians, when they give in to their flesh, speak disparagingly of the preaching ministry. Parents, relatives and friends discourage boys and young men from studying theology with disparaging words. And it also happens that they persuade preachers who are already in the ministry to leave it. The fact is that as Christians we hold all honorable professions in the world in high esteem. A Christian can and should also serve God in secular professions, as we have already remembered. But as far as importance for humanity is concerned, we should not place the preaching ministry below any other profession in the world. I repeat here before the Synod what I occasionally say to our theological students: Even put the case that a pastor could become mayor of a great city, governor of a state, or even president of the United States, he would have to reject this as a degradation

as far as the importance of the position of life is concerned. The reason is obvious to every Christian: all worldly public offices, even if properly administered, can only confer temporary benefits on mankind. The public preaching ministry instituted by Christ, properly administered, serves to save people from eternal destruction and to gain an eternal home in heaven. A preacher can and should therefore, even if in the deepest humility and with constant supplication for divine strength and help, constantly maintain that his ministry is the most important ministry that can be entrusted to a person here on earth. He will therefore not allow himself to be turned away from this office as long as he still possesses the ability to administer it.

Fourthly, if the preacher keeps the hereafter in mind, this will also protect him personally from the sad career of Demas, who left the apostle Paul, resigned his office and moved to Thessalonica because he had become fond of the world again, 2 Tim. 4:10. Preachers are also exposed to this temptation, insofar as they still have the corrupt flesh in them. One example is the aforementioned Demas. Demas was an assistant to the apostle Paul. He was with the apostle Paul in Rome. As we learn from the letter to the Colossians (Col 4:14), he sent a greeting from Rome to the church in Colosse. But in the 2nd letter to Timothy (2 Tim. 4:10), the apostle reports: "Demas has left me and has come to love this world." Poor Demas! You knew, and you preached it to others, that this world is passing away with its lust. And now you yourself are becoming fond of this passing world again! How could this happen? It could only happen because you did not cultivate the connection with the hereafter. You have forgotten your eternal inheritance in heaven. That is why this world has exerted such a great attraction on you.

Finally, a heart anchored in heaven is also so necessary for a preacher so that he does not quit the ministry because of supposed or real mistreatment. There is also supposed mistreatment that we teachers and preachers only imagine, or that we are wholly or partly to blame for. But nevertheless, there is still a lot of really bad and unworthy treatment, even on the part of Christians. On the other hand, let us remember a double fact: 1. the fact that we ourselves are by no means perfect in our ministry; 2. above all, this fact: as Christians in general, so Christian preachers in particular should not expect the due reward for their faithful ministry in this world. The preaching of the gospel in the world has always been a thankless business. And it will remain so. The apostles of Christ and Christ himself have not been treated according to their ministry in this world either. For all Christians, and especially for faithful Christian preachers, the proper

treatment comes only in the hereafter, in heaven. In Luther's time, too, gratitude for the Gospel very soon waned among many. Luther, however, says on behalf of all Christian preachers: "We shall also greatly reproach ourselves [in heaven] that we ever let a tear or a sigh escape us for the sake of the world's contempt and ingratitude. Why, we will say, have we not suffered worse things! If only I had never believed that there would be such great glory in eternal life, for otherwise I would not have been ashamed of it, even though I should have suffered much more. ... But all that we do in this world we do together for the glory of God, that many people may be converted and saved." (St. L. II, 1237.)

But now: How are we to be helped by God, who gives us such heavenly-minded preachers who are firmly focused on the hereafter? It is not we men who make them, but only God the Holy Spirit. We can do that, and we should do that: We teach our theological students what and how they must teach in order to save souls to heaven. Following the example of Paul in 2 Timothy 4, we exhort and implore them not to lose sight of this aspect. And not only do we teach and exhort them, but we also continually engage in practical exercises with them on how to apply God's Word in public preaching and in private pastoral care. We take them by the hand and lead them through all the tasks involved in the preaching ministry. Nevertheless, we teachers remain aware that it is beyond all human power to form true preachers. Here, too, neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but God who gives the fruit, 1 Cor. 3:7. Hence Luther says: "Doctors of arts, of medicine, of law, of Sententiae [that is, the sayings of Roman teachers] may be made by the pope, emperors and universities; but only be sure that no one will make you a doctor of the Holy Scriptures, which includes preachers, professors and Christian school teachers, except the Holy Spirit from heaven alone, as Christ says in John 6: 'They must all be taught by God Himself'." (St. L. X, 840 [?]) True Christian preachers and teachers are a free gift of God, a gift which God gives by grace to the Church through the prayer of Christians. That is why our Lutheran fathers included the words in the Sunday church prayer: "Bless in grace the education and instruction of our youth, that they may grow up in your fear, to the praise of your name. In particular, bless the orthodox educational institutions to equip faithful laborers in your vineyard." Let us rely on prayer, as Luther so often reminds Christians, which is also so excellently explained in a preface to the first volumes of *Lehre und Wehre*. Let us not rely on our own wisdom! Even if in the external administration of our Synod and

especially of our teaching institutions we do not always do the right and best thing — and this has never happened as long as our Synod has existed — let us rely on prayer! First of all, let us ask God for the right teachers for our teaching institutions. These are teachers in whose hearts, as Luther says, the article of justification prevails, and whose entire teaching activity is permeated by this article. Otherwise, even the most zealous teaching will only keep students from becoming true Christian teachers and preachers. On the other hand, let us ask God for the right students, that is, for pious students and pupils, for students and pupils who have personal experience of sin and grace. Otherwise Lutheran, that is, Christian theology as habitus practicus *ὕεόσδοτος,* as God-given ability, will not stick. Christ himself invites us to this prayer in the well-known words: "Ask the Lord of the harvest to send laborers into his harvest!" Matt. 9:38: O Lord, help us, let it prosper!

V.

The Connection of the Christian Church on Earth with Heaven.

All Christians, as we have seen, have their proper home in heaven from the moment they became members of the Christian Church on earth through faith in the Gospel. But God leaves most of them, after they have become Christians, for a time on earth, in a foreign land. During this time of sojourn in a foreign land, it is important to maintain the connection with heaven. We focus our attention on three things: 1. We truly need a secure and strong connection. 2. There is such a connection made and maintained by God Himself. 3. It is therefore important that we do not lose sight of the connection ordered by God.

First of all, we need a secure connection with heaven here on earth. For we are faced with the fact that here on earth our spiritual and eternal treasures, namely our state of grace and our inheritance in heaven, are hidden from our natural eyes. Just as we do not see our Savior here on earth with our physical eyes, so we do not see with our physical eyes the grace that He has earned for us, and therefore we do not see the heaven that grace has prepared for us. Rather, we see the opposite. We see the punishments and judgments with which God visits the sins of mankind: floods, pestilences, famine, wars and other divine judgments of wrath, also come upon Christians. And what lies before our natural eye, we see confirmed in Scripture. Scripture not only says of the wicked that he has many plagues, but also adds with regard to Christians that God's judgments and chastisements begin here on earth at the house of God, at the Christian Church, at Christians. Indeed, Scripture goes even further. It says that the

children of God have more plagues here on earth than other people. In addition, their own conscience accuses them. Their conscience accuses them of having partaken of the sins of the world around them, of disregarding and despising the gospel, the earthly mind and evil works. Thus Christians perceive God's wrath around them in the course of time and within themselves in the accusations of their own conscience. Under these circumstances, the certainty of God's grace fades. But with the certainty of grace, the certainty of their inheritance in heaven also disappears. Their connection with the gracious God in heaven does not seem to exist, or at least no longer exists, if they judge by what they see with their bodily eyes and feel in their natural hearts and consciences. This is truly great distress! In addition, the king of terrors, death, also stands before the natural eye of Christians. And it presents itself to the natural eye and sensibility as the opposite of life. It is true that all members of the Christian Church carry within them a new life borne by the Holy Spirit, a life that matures into eternal life, indeed, is already the beginning of eternal life. As Christ says in John 5:24: "Truly, truly, I say to you: Whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life." But this life is likewise hidden from our physical sight. It is hidden with Christ in God, says the Scripture (Col. 3:3). So it remains the case that what we see before us with our bodily eyes is not life, but death. Death inexorably announces itself to us through its many harbingers: Diminishing strength, infirmity and pain. If we do not experience the Last Day, so that in an instant and painlessly this mortal is transformed into the immortal, then we must die. And the death of Christians looks, on the surface, exactly like the death of unbelievers. Luther often expresses this somewhat crudely: 'The corpse of a Christian smells no better than the corpse of an unbeliever, a Jew or a Turk. Where does that leave our life, our eternal life in heaven? Christians' connection with the hereafter, their connection with their heavenly home, does not seem to exist!

In this distress we ask: Is there nothing here on earth that we can hold on to so that we can stay in touch with God's grace and our heavenly home? Yes, by God's grace there is a connection that God himself has established. There is a ladder to heaven for us humans here on earth. God himself has lowered it from heaven to this earth. There is a bridge that God himself has built between heaven and earth. And it is a strong bridge that does not collapse or waver, even though waves move with fierce recklessness, even though the sea rages

and rolls and the mountains fall in from its impetuosity. It is a ladder to heaven, a bridge from which no one has yet perished who has stepped on it and stayed on it. What kind of connection is that?

But first let us consider the false connections through which people want to link the hereafter with this world. Some believe that this must happen through spirits, through the souls of the deceased. This is spiritualism. Spiritism has become particularly fashionable in our time and also in our country. But spiritism is a great deception. It offers not a real, but an imaginary connection between this world and the hereafter. The rich man in hell asks that the deceased Lazarus return to this earth and report on the conditions of the hereafter. The request is denied. In addition, we have the express prohibition of God in Scripture: "Lest anyone be found among you asking questions of the dead!" Deuteronomy 18:11. Spiritism is a pagan abomination, a service of the devil forbidden by God. Luther says: "No soul has ever appeared from the beginning of the world; God does not want it either. For here you see in the Gospel (Luke 16) that Abraham will not allow the rich man to have a dead man teach the living.… And even if it were possible for it to be a soul or a good spirit, you should not learn anything from it or ask anything about it, because God has forbidden it." (St. L. XI, 1207 f.)

Others believe that the only sure connection between heaven and earth is a secret, immediate effect of the Holy Spirit, i.e. an effect that is detached from all external means. They claim: "Saving grace acts immediately." As is well known, this is the official teaching of Reformed church fellowships. Zwingli and Calvin already taught that the Holy Spirit does not need a "chariot" for his revelation and work on earth and therefore does not actually make use of a chariot, i.e. does not use external means such as God's Word and the sacraments for the revelation and communication of saving grace. But even this "direct" connection is an imaginary one, devised by men. Scripture knows nothing of it. Luther says crudely but correctly: "You will gape at heaven in vain", namely after this immediate revelation and effect. He adds: "The enthusiasts tear away the bridge and the footbridge on which the Holy Spirit comes to us humans with his revelation and effect of grace. What is thought to be a direct revelation and effect of the Holy Spirit is in fact a human product, man-made. If the error really prevails, it all comes down to man's own preparation and works. Which is why Luther rightly judged: "Papists and enthusiasts are one thing." But one's own

preparation and works establish no connection with heaven and are no way to the heavenly home, but on the contrary exclude one from it. The Scripture says: "For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse", Gal. 3:10,

What then is the right connection, established by God himself, between earth and heaven, which we can hold on to in faith and remain certain of God's grace and our heavenly home, even though we see God's wrathful judgments around us and death before us with our physical eyes? These are the means of grace ordained by God for the time of life here on earth, namely God's own Word and the sacred acts instituted by God, Holy Baptism and Holy Communion. Do we really and truly have God's own Word here on earth? Yes, thank God! The Holy Scripture, which Christ gave us through his prophets and apostles, is not the word of men, but God's own Word, for the holy men of God have spoken, driven by the Holy Spirit. And this word is a word of grace. The core and star of Holy Scripture is not Moses with his law, but Christ with his fulfillment of the law and with his bearing the curse of the law in our place. The core and star of Holy Scripture is the word of the gospel. The word of the gospel promises forgiveness of sins without the works of the law solely for the sake of the perfect merit of Christ, and every poor sinner should believe it, regardless of what is going on around him and in him. This is truly a sure connection with heaven! For where there is forgiveness of sins, there is also life and salvation. Furthermore, Christ has given holy Baptism in addition to the word of the gospel. Baptism takes place here on earth, but not from the earth. It is not merely an ecclesiastical ordinance, which the Christians of the first century would have arrived at through their own reflection and on the basis of pagan and Jewish purification ceremonies (as more recent theologians claim), but Holy Baptism is a very clearly defined divine ordinance. Christ commanded his church to baptize in the name of the triune God and "for the remission of sins" (Matt. 28:19; Acts 2:38). Holy Baptism, which promises forgiveness of sins to every baptized person, is also a sure connection with heaven. Christ's words are: "He who believes and is baptized will be saved", Mark 16:16. But Christ has strengthened the connection with heaven even further. In Holy Communion, Christ gives us here on this earth his body, which was given for us, and his blood, which was shed for us for the forgiveness of sin. In this wonderful gift of Holy Communion, Christ promises each individual communicant the fruit of his atoning death, the forgiveness of sins, and thus a

home in heaven. It is therefore certain that in the means of grace ordained by God, that is, in the promise of the Gospel, which we have in the Word of the Gospel, in Holy Baptism and in Holy Communion, we have the ladder to heaven, we have the footbridge and the bridge that forms the secure connection between this world and the blessed hereafter. No one has ever lacked heaven who has kept the promise of the Gospel in faith. Christ's word of promise is truly a secure position, indeed, the only fixed thing that exists in this world. Christ teaches us about this with the words: "Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away." (Luke 21:33) Christ's word of promise, grasped in faith, also carries us safely through death. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, If a man keep my saying, he shall never see death" (John 8:51).

And now we have to make sure that we don't let the bridge between heaven and earth be taken away from us. This involves two things. Firstly, we must hold fast to the doctrine of the inspiration of Holy Scripture, that is, we must hold fast to the fact that Holy Scripture is not the word of man, but the infallible word of God, the word on which one can safely rely in life and death, as Christ says: "The Scripture cannot be broken", John 10:35. We live in an exceedingly evil time. Just as the Christian Church is to be deprived of its heavenly goal and turned into a reform school for the state and human society on earth, the Bible is also to be made earthly. It should no longer be the infallible word of God, but the erroneous word of man. We so-called Missourians and those with us who hold the Holy Scriptures to be God's infallible word are regarded in wide circles as backward eccentrics. But let us not be misled! Our position on the Holy Scriptures is the position of our Savior Himself, because, as we have just heard, He says: "The Scriptures cannot be broken." And let us consider what this means! If we hold fast to the truth that Scripture is God's own Word, then we are certain that we will hear God speaking to us from heaven every time we hear the Word of Scripture on earth. And when we read the Scriptures here on earth with our fellow household members or for ourselves, we read what God has to say to us and to our fellow household members. What a wonderful and secure connection between this world and heaven! We can be imprisoned and cut off from the connection with people: if we have a Bible with us or if we have the Bible in our memory and heart, then we remain in secure contact with our Savior and our heavenly home. But if we allowed ourselves to become suspicious of the Holy Scriptures, as if they were not God's infallible Word, then the

secure connection between this world and the hereafter would be broken for us. Then the path here on earth would be dark, bleak and eerily cold. God preserve our Synod in the belief and confession that Holy Scripture is God's own infallible Word!

But there is a second aspect to the actual practical preservation of the connection with heaven. It can happen that someone confesses the inspiration of Scripture, even zeal for it, and yet his connection with the hereafter actually withers or even breaks off completely. This happens when we listen to, read and contemplate God's Word for our person without diligence. So may God grant and promote this realization in our Synod: Every Christian belongs in the church as often as God's Word is preached there, unless God himself, through the commandment of love, tells him to stay at home. Furthermore: In every Christian home belongs the home service. — And only in this way can the connection between the home here on earth and the home in heaven be maintained in practice. Let us also make diligent use of the special connection that God has established with us personally through Holy Baptism for the entire time of our life on earth through the promise of forgiveness of sins in our name! Our Baptism is a testimony issued by God himself that we have a right to heaven. Luther rightly reminds us, as we have heard, that we are not baptized for this earthly life, but for eternal life. The baptismal certificate, also used as a room decoration, is a powerful memorandum of the fact that we belong to heaven through faith in Christ. And as far as Holy Communion is concerned, we recognize from it in a particularly vivid way how much our dear Savior is concerned that our connection with heaven be maintained and continually strengthened. Let us use it diligently!

God has truly provided abundantly for our secure connection with the blessed hereafter. May he grant by grace for Christ's sake, through the action of the Holy Spirit, that all of us gathered here at the Synod may also arrive safely in the heavenly home to praise his wonderful grace for eternity with all the angels and the elect!